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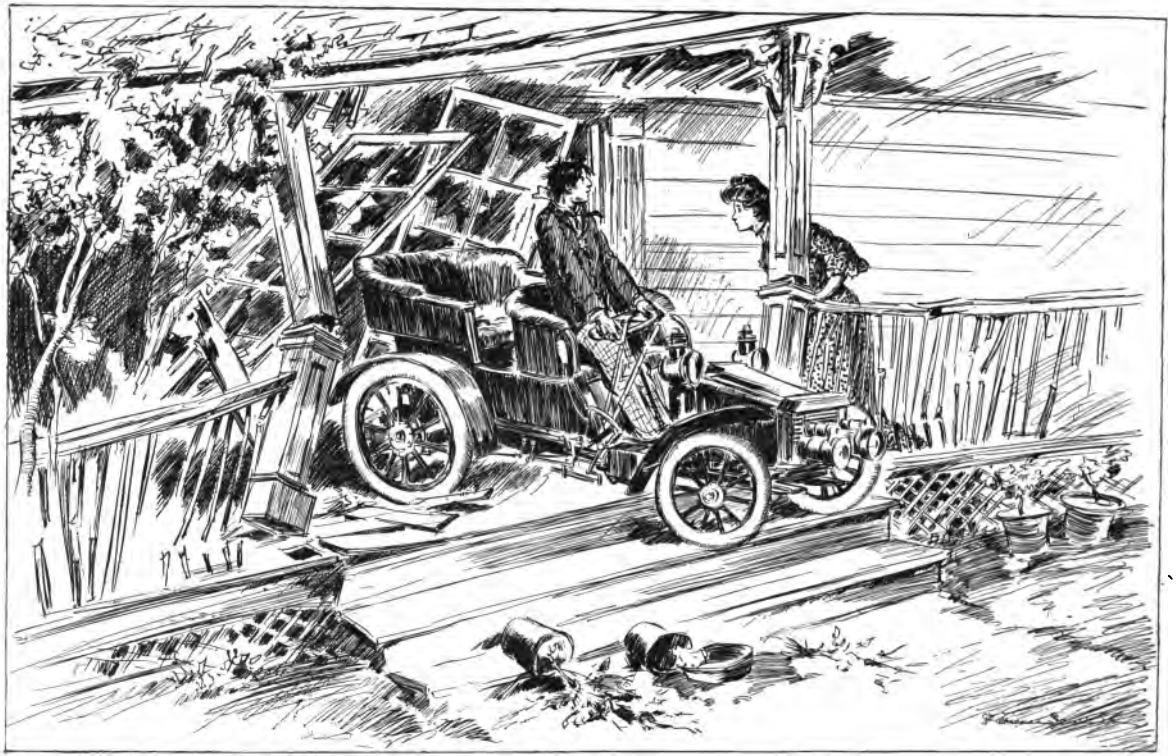

"HAVE YOU GOT THE HANG OF IT?" SAID ARAMINTA.—P. 41.

CHEERFUL AMERICANS

BY

CHARLES BATTELL LOOMIS

AUTHOR OF "THE FOUR-MASTED CAT BOAT," ETC.

With twenty-four illustrations by Florence Scovel Shinn, Fanny Y. Cory, F. L. Fithian, and F. R. Gruger

NEW YORK

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

1903

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Published July, 1903

TO

ISABELLA ELDRIDGE

NOTE

THERE is a great difference of opinion as to the desirability of prefaces. There are those who hold that a preface is in the nature of an impertinence, inasmuch as it is a species of unsolicited talk with a total stranger, who is not in a position to answer back—unless he be a reviewer.

On the other hand there are those who hold, with equal insistence on the point, that a preface is really a necessary salutation, a sort of "Here's luck to us both!" And these last would as soon do anything most rude as fail to provide their books with a well-made and properly adjusted preface.

And truth to say, readers of books are also divided on the subject, some turning to prefaces with every mark of favor, and others turning hastily the leaf or leaves that contain them.

Behold then my quandary. How shall I escape offense whatever I place, or do not place, before these stories of "Cheerful Americans"?

Time presses, the page is meager, and what remarks I might have made concerning my tales must go unsaid, in order that I may conclude within a reasonable limit.

Well, then: to the haters of prefaces, I say that it would ill become me to be knowingly impertinent or impertinently knowing to any stranger—least of all to a reviewer (Heaven bless him!).

And to the others, since you think it a part of manners for the author to say something before he lets go of the book—"Here's to our better acquaintance!"

C. B. L.

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CHEERFUL AMERICANS

A Man of Putty

AS I look back to that day, not two weeks since, it seems impossible that any of the ensuing incidents could have taken place, but when I see that there are three seats at table where there used to be four I am compelled to believe that it is not a dream.

It is all so like a romance that I believe others will be interested in it. Mrs. Docey says that I am lacking in reserve, that I should not invite the world to share in family secrets, but I say better for me to tell the story than to have it come out in some sensational sheet with names spelled wrong, incidents distorted, and a general air of commonplace vulgarity spread over the whole affair.

Well, to begin. Some two weeks ago I left my office in New York and took the train for the place in the country where my family are summering. Perhaps at this point I should say that my family consists of Mrs. Docey, or did consist of Mrs. Docey, Miss Irene Docey, and Miss Anna Docey.

I left New York and after two or three hours in the cars I arrived at Barkinton, the station that lies nearest to our summer place. Hitched near the depot I found a horse and wagon awaiting me. It belongs to one of my neighbors up at Hillton. He goes down the road on Saturdays to spend Sunday with his family at "the shore," and he leaves his horse for me to take back. It is a sort of Box and Cox arrangement. I go down on the early Monday morning train, leaving the animal hitched as before. My neighbor comes up soon after and drives home. Thus livery hire is saved and it becomes possible for him to show his neigh-

borly qualities every week. In the winter he and his wife generally spend a week at our New York house and then—we pay for the horse.

Sometimes my wife or one of my daughters comes down to do a little shopping and goes back with me, but on this particular occasion the horse was quite alone. I climbed into the Concord wagon and had driven a mile on my way when I saw ahead of me a well-put-up man of about thirty years of age. These details of course came to me afterward, but I give them first. He was good-looking, and had acquired that ease of manner that comes to those who are accustomed to have their own way in all things. I have no such ease of manner, alas the day.

The pedestrian looked over his shoulder at me and stopped and waited for me to come abreast of him. Now it happened that just before I met him my horse had gone lame, and I was of two minds as to whether

or no I ought to get out and walk to relieve the beast of some of his burden. I am not used to horses and I may be unduly sensitive and overmerciful, but I know that if I were lame I should not feel like pulling a man three miles uphill through dusty roads, and I never seem to realize that a horse is stronger than I. However, I had seriously thought of getting out at the next pitch of hill, and congratulated myself on having forgotten to get a hundred of feed for my neighbor.

When I saw the man stop I knew that I must refuse him a ride, and I went over in my mind various ways of couching my refusal—for in the country to refuse a man a lift is to proclaim yourself too mean to live.

My horse limped on, and as I came up to the stranger he turned and said, "How do, Summer Resident? You're just in time. I was beginning to think the cars never ran on this road."

Surely a breezy salutation, and one that made my seeming churlishness hard to carry off successfully. But before I could get out and tell him of my horse's lameness he had jumped into the wagon with an agility a little out of the common, and I found myself traveling along with a two-hundred-pound passenger—which was twice as bad as a bag of meal.

"I'm sorry——" I began.

"Sorry?" said he, taking the words out of my mouth. "Sorry for anything on a day like this, when earth and air and sky are uniting in a trio whose harmony is ravishingly sweet? This is no day to be sorry, Summer Resident. What sin is it that makes you sorry?"

Now I leave it to anybody if this semi-poetic, wholly flippant way of talking was proper toward a man who will soon see forty? My dignity was offended, but I can never make a man understand when my dignity has received a stab. He always seems

to think it cause for laughter, and I saw that I could not be dignified with this obtrusive but genial man. So I plopped the words out quick: "My horse has gone lame and I was going to get out at the beginning of this hill."

"Oh, that's what you were sorry for?" said he with an unctuous laugh. "Sorry that my coming would prevent your doing it? Now, my dear Mister Man, you simply must not treat me as company. You have given me a lift, following a law of the country road, but you must not feel called upon to stay and amuse me. Take your little constitutional up the hill and I will drive slowly, and when we have reached the level you must get in again, because it is on the level road that we get in our best licks in this hill country."

He stopped—and I actually got out. Well, it was as much on account of the horse as anything. It would have been cruel to make him pull three hundred and ten pounds

uphill, and my new-found friend was evidently in no mind to alight.

"I'm getting out," said I with just a vestige of dignity, "because I think the horse has too heavy a load."

"The act does you credit," said the stranger with an approving smile. "What is your name, anyhow? I hate Mister Man and Summer Resident."

"My name is Docey," said I.

"From the same root as docile, or I'll eat my hat," said he. "You are just the man who *would* be merciful to his beast. I wish I were half as merciful. Now that you speak of it I believe that the horse *is* limping, and I guess it is because he has a stone in his foot. You just lift his forefoot and see."

Now I hate to touch a horse, having been born and brought up in the city, but there was something in this man that compelled me to lay aside fear, and I lifted the horse's foot, and, sure enough, there lay a stone

firmly imbedded between the shoe and that little hillock that lies in the center of the hoof. I got the stone out, but not before the horse had stepped on me and given me a painful bruise that brought the tears to my eyes.

"What, crying a day like this?" said my Young Man of the Sea. "What's personal pain, man, to the thought that you have relieved the horse? Now climb in and we will make the old fellow show his mettle."

I attempted to climb in on the right side, the better to drive, but he said, "No, get in on the left. You must allow me to relieve you of any work until we reach your home. I haven't driven in weeks, and this is just the day to get good work out of the good animal."

I got into that carriage feeling that the stranger was actually kind to allow me the privilege. Not once had I thought that he would whip up and drive away with horse and wagon. I read him for what he was

then, and nothing that has happened since has made me change my opinion. He was a masterful man and I am not. Perhaps in me he saw one on whom he could play. Perhaps if he had been masterful without humor he would not have done what he did, but it was a zestful day, and he was playing cat to my mouse and enjoying it.

I sat down, he applied the whip, and the horse leaped forward at a pace that neither my neighbor nor myself had ever suspected was within his ability.

I was now able to study my carriage mate, and I marked him for a man who, if shipwrecked on an unhabited island in the South Pacific, would be king of that island in six months. He had gray-green eyes, a vigorous chin, and a mouth whose grimness was softened by a humorous curve at the tail of his lips. A large, straight nose and a generous ear showed him to be anything but a mean man, and his talk gave evidence to some cultivation wrapped up in a large

amount of slang and flippancy that often annoyed me.

" My name is Tolmach," said he, although I had not asked him. " Jack Tolmach. I believe I am descended from the Tollemache-Tollemaches of England, but I don't care a rap. They couldn't wag *me* if we met. I'm a wagger from the word go. I can't and I won't play second fiddle to anyone." Here he broke off at a tangent to say, " Why, *this* is no plug. When I saw you coming I said he was a plug. A horse is not so much what his component parts are as he is what gets to him through the reins. You're an easy-going, good-hearted foddy-doddy. No offense; I'm just explaining why the horse is going his fastest now. The reins are telegraph wires and you, the driver, send messages to the horse. *You* say, ' Old horse-You - are - lame - and - not - strong - Take - your-time-Answer.' And ' Old Horse ' answers by drooping his head and ambling. I step into the telegraph office and I say, ' *My-*

horse - Git - up - and - git - No - answer - required - No - back - talk - of - any - kind.' And he goes."

"I dare say you are right," said I, amused in spite of myself, although his picture of me had been totally unlike the one I should have drawn of myself. Well, perhaps *my* picture of me would have been as unlike the real Me as his was.

"When do you dine, noon or night?" asked he, looking at his watch.

"We dine at night," said I, wondering what was coming next.

What was coming next came quickly.

"That's good. This day and this drive have given me the appetite of a god. I dined at the hotel in the town back there, but I wouldn't know it. Your hotel dinners are as like as canned peas and just about as unsatisfactory. Say, if a man were to make a composite photograph of every country hotel dinner in the United States the composite would be like each separate picture.

In fact, he could get his composite from the first picture he took. Going to have any company to-night?"

"No, not any," said I unsuspectingly.

"Wrong," said he, bursting out into a laugh so hearty and infectious that I laughed with him. "Wrong, for I am going to dine with you. I told you my appetite had been sharpened."

Some might have imagined at this point that Mr. Tolmach was out of his senses, but I had no such thought. I had sometimes wondered what would happen if I were to go into some city house and say, "I've come to dinner." He was a good-humored and absolutely audacious practical joker who had found in me an easy prey.

"Well, really, you seem to have no trouble in asking for what you want," said I, and that was all I could say. I could not, I literally could not say to him, "Mr. Tolmach, I do not know you and I do not keep a public house." That would have given him a

chance to say, "So much the better. A select few is better than a motley crowd."

"Why, no," said he; "of course I have no trouble asking for what I want. As I take it, we are put into the world and are given to understand that we are entitled to as much of the world as we can get. Some men get what they want by purchase, some by grabbing, and some by good-humoredly but firmly asking. I never grab and I often purchase, but I find that there are few who can refuse a well-modulated request with a touch of human nature in it. I began life as a poor boy in the country. My parents died when I was ten, and I was cast on the world knowing how to read, with the multiplication table mine, with a good natural fist, and plenty of good humor that would stand strains. Lots of men have good humor that is good to look at, but you mustn't touch it. It's what I call touchy good humor. The real good humor is made of India-rubber, and you can jump on it and

pinch it and it won't alter the shape a bit."

"Turn here," said I, for we were now come to the little settlement that announces the nearness of my summer home.

"Good, I see your house. That white one with the ampelopsis on it. Am I right?"

"Yes," said I. "Go on with the story of your life."

"That's all. I could read, write, and cipher, and couldn't get angry, and the rest was easy. I can read a little better now and *have* read a good deal; I can write my name to a check for fifty thousand dollars, which shows that I understand addition pretty well, and I have two hundred pounds of good nature as against the sixty I had when a boy of ten. I know this country pretty well from Maine to Washington, and I can tell a Van Dyck from a Claude Lorrain in any gallery in Europe. Is this where we get out?"

I may not be believed, but by this time I should have been sorry to see the man go on his way. He interested me. He humbled my pride, and I took the humbling in good part. I dare say that among the Brahmins of Boston he would not have passed, but I am not a Brahmin of Boston. I lived in Boston for two years and not a Brahmin knew or cared. But I recognized in Mr. Tolmach a man who was not hidebound by conventions, and I thought that an hour or two of him would be in the nature of entertainment for us all, so I legalized his self-invitation by seconding it graciously.

The horse disposed of, I invited Mr. Tolmach to sit on the veranda while I went in and told Mrs. Docey of his arrival and explained his nature to her. I half expected him to follow me in, but when he did not I recognized that I had done him an injustice.

My two daughters had gone out for a walk and Mrs. Docey was lying down, but

she arose, and when she had dressed she came down to the veranda where Mr. Tolmach and I were rendering cigars valueless.

When I presented my new-found friend I half expected some hifalutin speech, but he bowed respectfully and murmured something as unintelligible as anyone could have wished. He also offered Mrs. Docey one of my chairs.

We talked of many things and I could see that Mrs. Docey was impressed with him. While we were talking my daughters returned from their walk. Irene is tall and very pretty, Anna is short and interesting-looking. He bowed to both, but addressed himself to Irene, and in a short time Anna excused herself and went into the house, and I saw that she was not pleased with our guest.

He was the life of the feast when we all assembled in the dining room. He had indeed been everywhere and he had brought

something away from every place. He was not like that business man in western New York who went to Venice and was asked upon his return what he thought of the city of the doges.

"Had no chance to think anything. Saw it under adverse circumstances. Streets were literally flooded. Yes, there was one thing struck me. The dagos had taken advantage of the flood to rig up a lot of canoes, and they were making hay while the floods lasted. But I left soon."

Mr. Tolmach was not like that man. He knew the point of view appropriate to each place he had visited in this and the old country, and I was sincerely glad that I had picked him up—or, rather, that he had picked me up and brought me home in time for such a pleasant dinner.

Coffee was served on the veranda, and just about the time that I supposed he was going to rise and take his departure—for he had told me that he was due at Columbus,

Ohio, the forepart of the week, his vacation being at an end—he suggested that we take a walk, and as Anna did not care to make one of the party Mrs. Docey and I walked side by side, and he and Irene walked ahead. The west was yet stained with the sunset dyes and the moon was ready to light up the earth as soon as the sun should have entirely given over his duties. A crisp westerly breeze made it just the evening for a walk, but I, thinking only of the conventions, said to Mrs. Docey, "When *is* this man going?" and was surprised to have her reply, "I don't care if he never goes. I like him."

"Anna doesn't," said I.

"Anna is too young," was her answer, given so impressively that I turned and looked at her. She returned my stare and said, "Irene likes him, and that is more to the point."

I shook my head flabbergastedly. "Women are enigmas," said I.

"Why," said Mrs. Docey, lowering her already low voice, "I don't mean that I shouldn't wish him to furnish references, but if I can read character at all he is fundamentally a nice man and a manly man, and he is very fond of Irene. It is a case of love at first sight with him."

"Then the sooner he is out of sight the better," said I. I had a vision of my Irene gracing an Ohio home, and I did not like it.

We had now come to a wood road that leads down to the trolley road that connects Winston and Barkinton. Irene picked a wild-flower by the waning light and brought it to her mother to ask some question concerning its species, and I took the opportunity to draw Mr. Tolmach aside.

"I don't want to seem rude," said I, "but the last train from Barkinton leaves at 8.20, and the last connecting trolley will be along in a few minutes. This wood road leads to the track. If you are thinking of going to——"

"I gave up that thought just about the time the roast was served," said Mr. Tolmach pleasantly but firmly. "I will admit that I forced myself upon you in the road and I have no intention of forcing myself still further, but if you cannot accommodate me for the night perhaps you can tell me of some farmer who does not object to a boarder——"

Mrs. Docey had overheard the last part of his remark, and she came forward at this juncture and said:

"I think that Mr. Parker has a room vacant, but he had gone to Riverton to-night. If Mr. Tolmach cares to accept——"

There was no help for it now if Mrs. Docey had come to his aid, so I interrupted and said:

"Why—er—yes, we'd be—er—pleased to have you stay overnight. There's a train that connects with one for the West in the morning."

"It's very kind of you," said Mr. Tol-

mach, speaking to me but looking at Irene, and the last ray of sunlight having vanished from the west we walked home. . . .

Mrs. Docey slept peacefully that night, but I did not. I accused myself of being a sumph, whatever that is, and I wished that I had whipped up or ever I had seen the odious Mr. Tolmach. He was just as breezy as he had been, but I wanted to protect my daughter from every breeze that blows.

Breakfast is generally a very pleasant affair. Both Irene and Anna have a way of investing a very small incident with a temporary interest that makes for the enlivenment of a meal, but this morning every time I looked at either Irene or Mr. Tolmach I felt a twinge of pain. She seemed to dwell so on his words, and all his utterances seemed intended for her approval. Mrs. Docey prospered his jests with abundant laughter, and even Anna smiled at his Western breeziness. Not one of my family

understood that I was playing the rôle of dignified parent, and after a while I gave over playing it and allowed myself to be amused at Mr. Tolmach's sallies, and even joined with him in airy persiflage.

After breakfast I intimated to Mr. Tolmach that we drove to church in Barkinton at ten o'clock, but that if he wished to catch the train I could carry him down in time for it.

"Trains run every day, Mr. Docey," said he; "but days like this don't occur more than once or twice in a lifetime. I am my own master, and to-morrow will suit my business as well as to-day."

Just then Irene appeared at the door and said:

"Mr. Tolmach, if you really want to see the old-fashioned garden I'll take you there."

Again that twinge, but I did not stop them, although I knew that they were unchaperoned, and that an old-fashioned gar-

den is one of the best places in the world for love-making. I proposed to Mrs. Docey in an old-fashioned garden.

Anna had gone to her room to prepare her Bible lesson, and Mrs. Docey was in the kitchen superintending the making of some intricate dessert. I sat down by a window overlooking the garden and tried to interest myself with a current magazine, but if my eyes fell on the pictures and text they saw nothing but the picture in the garden: the tall and graceful Irene, and the type of American resolution at her side, as they wandered along the winding walks and pretended to interest themselves in hollyhocks and love-in-a-mist when love was in plain sight—to me at least.

What was it my duty to do? Should I rush out into the garden and say, "Here, Mr. Tolmach, if you are going to propose to my daughter wait until you know her better!" He might not be going to do it, and I should have added another success to my

long series of ridiculous parts. I could not call Irene into the house on any pretense whatever, for I am not good at pretending. I could merely sit at the window and lament that I am not another type of man.

It may have been a half-hour later or it may have been the next afternoon that Mrs. Docey went to the back piazza and called Irene in, excusing herself to Mr. Tolmach. Really, it sounded as if she thought that Mr. Tolmach had a claim on the girl already, and that she must ask permission to borrow her daughter for a few brief moments.

Irene's return to the house was the signal for Mr. Tolmach to return also, only whereas she went to the kitchen he came to the front door and walked into the library where I was sitting.

"Well, this is another of those days Browning talks about, isn't it?" said he.

I told him tartly that I didn't know that Browning talked about any days; that I

didn't pretend to follow Browning, but that there was too much east wind to suit me.

He took no notice of my ill nature, but seated himself in an easy chair, reached over for a cigar, and then withdrew his hand in so whimsical a way that I said, "Help yourself."

"Join me," said he, quite as if he were presenting me with the box, and we lit from the same match.

I smoked feverishly; he as calmly as a stage detective. He blew countless wreaths into the study air and looked out of the window at the long reach of hills in a contiguous State, hills twenty miles away, but the village's most valuable asset from the point of view of the summer visitor. Oh, if he would only go over those hills and vanish in the illimitable purple!

"Ever think about your daughter's going off?" said he finally.

I stabbed a pen into the desk, but I didn't say anything.

"Don't wonder at it at all," said he sympathetically. "I'd feel just the same way if I had a daughter like Miss Irene." He offered me a light for my cigar, which after violently puffing for a season I had allowed to go out.

When my weed had resumed consumption he looked me full in the face and said: "Well, there's no use of mincing words or of wasting 'em. I'm hard hit. If anyone had told me last night that the little man in the Concord wagon drawn by a limping horse was going to carry me to where they would make a target of my heart I should have refused to get in, for I supposed that I was a confirmed bachelor and gloried in the supposition. But I felt like imposing myself on you just because it struck my humor, and here I am, and I want to tell you that your daughter satisfies all my ideas of what a woman should be. Now I expect you to say No because you don't know whether I was born yesterday or have been

a criminal in five or six previous existences, but I'm going to give you time to verify me. I'm going to let you call up the Governor of this State, who happens to be my brother-in-law, and if you're not satisfied with his recommendation I can connect you with solid business men in Stamford and New Britain and Waterbury. I'll get 'em before they go to church, for that's the kind of men all of 'em are—churchgoers. I haven't been myself, but if Miss Irene *wants* me to I'll become whatever she is as soon as I've read up on the requirements. If you are convinced that I am what I say I am, a successful man of business who is just entering on his first bit of romance, I'll take to-morrow's train for Columbus and I'll arrange my business so that I can leave it indefinitely, and then I'll come back here and make a father-in-law of you in ten minutes by the clock. I have asked your daughter and she is willing to abide by your decision even if it is ad-

verse. She also said something about waiting. But there won't be any need of waiting, and I know what your decision will be just as I knew yesterday that you would bring me home to dinner. As for waiting, if we decided to do that I'd have to go to Columbus, and neither you nor she would have a chance to study my character, and at the end of six months we shouldn't have advanced a step. This is all I have to say except that I sounded Mrs. Docey just after breakfast and she repressed a pleased smile. Now, if you'll give me the telephone book I'll show you what number to call up."

He ended his long speech, which I had heard in silence, and I know that there are those who will say that I ought to have jumped up quickly and thrown him out, but I weigh one hundred and ten pounds, and he weighs at least two hundred, and it's all solid. If I had taken him and flung him he would not have gone far. He would have come back. I should once more have been

ridiculous. I determined to submit gracefully. He showed me the telephone number of the Governor of Connecticut, a sterling man for whom I had voted gladly, and I called him up and found him just about starting for church.

I told him who I was, and he gave the following replies to my questions:

"Know Mr. Tolmach—Jack Tolmach? Of course I do. He's my brother-in-law—my wife's brother."

It was hard after this declaration of relationship for me to ask in cold blood whether my visitor was all right, but one can say things over miles of wire that would sound awkward in a face-to-face conversation, and I put my query.

"Good as wheat. Fine as silk," came the answer.

Here someone else seemed to have come near the telephone, for the Governor began to laugh and I heard feminine laughter.

The Governor continued. "What's your

hurry, Mr. Docey? Indorsed any paper of his?"

"No, oh no, but he wants to marry my daughter."

Again I heard laughter. It seemed to strike the Governor as queer that I should telephone instead of writing, but Mr. Tolmach was in a hurry to get back to his business and the mails are slow.

I explained this to him. I said: "Mr. Tolmach wants to get back to Columbus and I don't know him as well as—as well as I hope to—and he suggested you as a well-known man, and I voted for you, so I thought I might call you up even though you never met me. One has to be careful about one's daughter."

The Governor: I didn't get that last. One has to be what?

Myself: One has to be careful about one's daughter.

The Governor (after a whispered consultation with the one who was near—probably

his wife): Yes, you are right. One can't be too careful about one's daughter. Well, I can recommend Jack. He's self-made and he's always had his own way, but he gains his will gracefully.

Myself: Oh, yes, I know that. Well, then, you would advise me to let them get married?

The Governor: Why, of course, that rests with you, but Jack is all right. How long have you known him?

Myself: Oh, since last night. I feel I know him pretty well, but I wanted to make sure.

The Governor: Your cautiousness does you credit, but it's unnecessary in Jack's case. He's a good boy and will make a good son. I'll write, but I must go now. The Governor is never late to church, you know.

I caught the ring of immoderate laughter, and then I was cut off. There had been no chance of collusion. I had heard the Governor make several political speeches, for

although my business is in New York, I am interested in Connecticut politics, and I recognized his voice.

I felt that to refuse my sanction after Mr. Tolmach had received this clean bill of health would be churlish, a thing that I always try to avoid. I had been in the box, but the door was open, and Tolmach had heard most of my replies, and had gathered the gist of the conversation. He looked radiant.

"That's just like Bill, said he. "Always ready to oblige, and just as approachable as if he was the most insignificant man in the State. That was his wife, probably, who was laughing. She has a keen sense of humor."

"Well, so have I," I replied, "but I don't see what there was to laugh at. My questions were perfectly natural in a father. Perhaps the laughter was a little bit hysterical, you being her brother."

At this juncture the door opened and

Irene and her mother came in. I made a sign for Tolmach to step out, and he like a good fellow did so.

After he had closed the door behind him and I heard his manly step on the veranda I said: "Irene, do you love Mr. Tolmach?"

She hid her face on her mother's shoulder and burst into tears, but nodded her head so emphatically that I could not mistake her meaning, much as I should have liked to. It will be seen that I was not entirely reconciled to the new condition of things.

Mrs. Docey nodded her own head ecstatically, and with the firmness that I try to infuse into my disposition at critical times I called Mr. Tolmach in.

He came, his countenance radiant. He looked at Irene and her face kindled as the evening star kindles after the glance of the sun. That may sound poetic, but Irene would make anyone poetic. I determined to give her away with dignity. I went over to her and kissed her. Then I kissed her

mother. Then I shook hands with Tolmach and said, with just a touch of a quaver in my voice:

"Go to Columbus and prepare for another vacation."

And now to-day, two weeks later, I am writing this and the Governor and his wife are on their way to the station. Mr. and Mrs. Tolmach left an hour since, bound for Europe, where they can compare Claude Lorrains with Van Dycks, and tell which is a portrait and which a landscape at sight.

"GO TO COLUMBUS AND PREPARE FOR ANOTHER VACATION."—P. 34.

Araminta and the Automobile

SOME persons spend their surplus on works of art; some spend it on Italian gardens and pergolas; there are those who sink it in golf, and I have heard of those who expended it on charity.

None of these forms of getting away with money appealed to Araminta and myself. As soon as it was ascertained that the automobile was practicable and would not cost a king's ransom, I determined to devote my savings to the purchase of one.

Araminta and I live in a suburban town; she because she loves Nature and I because I love Araminta. We have been married for five years.

I am a bank clerk in New York, and morning and night I go through the monotony

of railway travel, and for one who is forbidden to use his eyes on the train and who does not play cards it *is* monotony, for in the morning my friends are either playing cards or else reading their papers, and one does not like to urge the claims of conversation on one who is deep in politics or the next play of his antagonist; so my getting to business and coming back are in the nature of purgatory. I therefore hailed the automobile as a Heaven-sent means of swift motion with an agreeable companion, and with no danger of encountering either newspapers or cards. I have seen neither reading nor card-playing going on in any automobile.

The community in which I live is not progressive, and when I said that I expected to buy an automobile as soon as my ship came in I was frowned upon by my neighbors. Several of them have horses, and all, or nearly all, have feet. The horsemen were not more opposed to my proposed ownership than the footmen—I should say pedestrians.

They all thought automobiles dangerous and a menace to public peace, but of course I pooh-poohed their fears and, being a person of a good deal of stability of purpose, I went on saving my money, and in course of time I bought an automobile of the electric sort.

Araminta is plucky, and I am perfectly fearless. When the automobile was brought home and housed in the little barn that is on our property, the man who had backed it in told me that he had orders to stay and show me how it worked, but I laughed at him—good-naturedly yet firmly. I said, "Young man, experience teaches more in half an hour than books or precepts do in a year. A would-be newspaper man does not go to a school of journalism if he is wise; he gets a position on a newspaper and learns for himself, and through his mistakes. I know that one of these levers is to steer by, that another lets loose the power, and that there is a foot-brake. I also know that the ma-

chine is charged, and I need to know no more. Good-day."

Thus did I speak to the young man, and he saw that I was a person of force and discretion, and he withdrew to the train and I never saw him again.

Araminta had been to Passaic shopping, but she came back while I was out in the barn looking at my new purchase, and she joined me there. I looked at her lovingly, and she returned the look. Our joint ambition was realized; we were the owners of an automobile, and we were going out that afternoon.

Why is it that cheap barns are so flimsily built? I know that our barn is cheap because the rent for house and barn is less than what many a clerk, city pent, pays for a cramped flat, but again I ask, why are they flimsily built? I have no complaint to make. If my barn had been built of good stout oak I might to-day be in a hospital.

It happened this way. Araminta said,

"Let me get in, and we will take just a little ride to see how it goes," and I out of my love for her said, "Wait just a few minutes, dearest, until I get the hang of the thing. I want to see how much go she has and just how she works."

Araminta has learned to obey my slightest word, knowing that love is at the bottom of all my commands, and she stepped to one side while I entered the gayly painted vehicle and tried to move out of the barn. I moved out. But I backed. Oh, blessed, cheaply built barn. My way was not restricted to any appreciable extent. I shot gayly through the barn into the hen yard, and the sound of the ripping clapboards frightened the silly hens who were enjoying a dust-bath, and they fled in more directions than there were fowls.

I had not intended entering the hen yard, and I did not wish to stay there, so I kept on out, the wire netting not being what an automobile would call an obstruction. I

never lose my head, and when I heard Araminta screaming in the barn, I called out cheerily to her, "I'll be back in a minute, dear, but I'm coming another way."

And I did come another way. I came all sorts of ways. I really don't know what got into the machine, but she now turned to the left and made for the road, and then she ran along on her two left wheels for a moment, and then seemed about to turn a somersault, but changed her mind, and, still veering to the left, kept on up the road, passing my house at a furious speed, and making for the open country. With as much calmness as I could summon I steered her, but I think I steered her a little too much, for she turned toward my house.

I reached one end of the front piazza at the same time that Araminta reached the other end of it. I had the right of way, and she deferred to me just in time. I removed the vestibule storm door. It was late in March, and I did not think we should have

any more use for it that season. And we didn't.

I had ordered a strongly built machine, and I was now glad of it, because a light and weak affair that was merely meant to run along on a level and unobstructed road would not have stood the assault on my piazza. Why, my piazza did not stand it. It caved in, and made work for an already overworked local carpenter who was behindhand with his orders. After I had passed through the vestibule, I applied the brake, and it worked. The path is not a cinder one, as I think them untidy, so I was not more than muddied. I was up in an instant, and looked at the still enthusiastic machine with admiration.

"Have you got the hang of it?" said Araminta.

Now that's one thing I like about Araminta. She does not waste words over non-essentials. The point was not that I had damaged the piazza. I needed a new one,

anyway. The main thing was that I was trying to get the hang of the machine, and she recognized that fact instantly.

I told her that I thought I had, and that if I had pushed the lever in the right way at first, I should have come out of the barn in a more conventional way.

She again asked me to let her ride, and as I now felt that I could better cope with the curves of the machine I allowed her to get in.

"Don't lose your head," said I.

"I hope I shan't," said she dryly.

"Well, if you have occasion to leave me, drop over the back. Never jump ahead. That is a fundamental rule in runaways of all kinds."

Then we started, and I ran the motor along for upward of half a mile after I had reached the highway, which I did by a short cut through a field at the side of our house. There is only a slight rail fence surrounding

it, and my machine made little of that. It really seemed to delight in what some people would have called danger.

"Araminta, are you glad that I saved up for this?"

"I am mad with joy," said the dear thing, her face flushed with excitement mixed with expectancy. Nor were her expectations to be disappointed. We still had a good deal to do before we should have ended our first ride.

So far I had damaged property to a certain extent, but I had no one but myself to reckon with, and I was providing work for people. I always have claimed that he who makes work for two men where there was only work for one before, is a public benefactor, and that day I was the friend of carpenters and other mechanics.

Along the highway we flew, our hearts beating high, but never in our mouths, and at last we saw a team approaching us. By "a team" I mean a horse and buggy. I

was raised in Connecticut, where a team is anything you choose to call one.

The teamster saw us. Well, perhaps I should not call him a teamster (although he was one logically): he was our doctor, and, as I say, he saw us.

Now I think it would have been friendly in him, seeing that I was more or less of a novice at the art of automobiling, to have turned to the left when he saw that I was inadvertently turning to the left, but the practice of forty years added to a certain native obstinacy made him turn to the right, and he met me at the same time that I met him.

The horse was not hurt, for which I am truly glad, and the doctor joined us, and continued with us for a season, but his buggy was demolished.

Of course I am always prepared to pay for my pleasure, and though it was not, strictly speaking, my pleasure to deprive my physician of his turn-out, yet if he *had* turned out

it wouldn't have happened—and, as I say, I was prepared to get him a new vehicle. But he was very unreasonable; so much so that, as he was crowding us—for the seat was not built for more than two, and he is stout—I at last told him that I intended to turn around and carry him home, as we were out for pleasure, and he was giving us pain.

I will confess that the events of the last few minutes had rattled me somewhat, and I did not feel like turning just then, as the road was narrow. I knew that the road turned of its own accord a half-mile farther on, and so I determined to wait.

"I want to get out," said the doctor tartly, and just as he said so Araminta stepped on the brake, accidentally. The doctor got out —in front. With great presence of mind I reversed, and so we did not run over him. But he was furious and sulphurous, and that is why I have changed to homeopathy. He was the only allopathic doctor in Brantford.

I suppose that if I had stopped and apolo-

gized, he would have made up with me, and I would not have got angry with him, but I couldn't stop. The machine was now going as she had done when I left the barn, and we were backing into town.

Through it all I did not lose my coolness. I said: "Araminta, look out behind, which is ahead for us, and if you have occasion to jump now, do it in front, which is behind," and Araminta understood me.

She sat sideways, so that she could see what was going on, but that might have been seen from any point of view, for we were the only things going on—or backing.

Pretty soon we passed the wreck of the buggy, and then we saw the horse grazing on dead grass by the roadside, and at last we came on a few of our townfolk who had seen us start, and were now come out to welcome us home. But I did not go home just then. I should have done so if the machine had minded me and turned in at our driveway, but it did not.

Across the way from us there is a fine lawn leading up to a beautiful greenhouse full of rare orchids and other plants. It is the pride of my very good neighbor, Jacob Rawlinson.

The machine, as if moved by *malice prépense,* turned just as we came to the lawn, and began to back at railroad speed.

I told Araminta that if she was tired of riding, now was the best time to stop; that she ought not to overdo it, and that I was going to get out myself as soon as I had seen her off.

I saw her off.

Then after one ineffectual jab at the brake, I left the machine hurriedly, and as I sat down on the sposhy lawn I heard a tremendous but not unmusical sound of falling glass. . . .

I tell Araminta that it isn't the running of an automobile that is expensive. It is the stopping of it.

The Man from Ochre Point, New Jersey

SYMON—that was his last name. I'd be willing to wager that his first name was Simple, although on the passenger list it was merely S. Symon.

I met him the second day out. The reason I came to talk to him—but perhaps I ought to say that we were both running from Southampton to New York.

He had a retreating chin and a receding forehead, and ears that must have made walking difficult in a high wind; and the first thing I heard him say drew me to him:

"I thought St. Paul's was in Rome. I was a whole day in London, but I didn't try to see St. Paul's because I didn't know it was there. But I did go up in a tremenjous church that had a whispering-gallery in it, and I thought I'd die a-laughing to hear the

"YES; N'YORK'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME."—P. 49.

voices come right out of the air in front of me. An old feller told me to stop because they were having a funeral below."

"Why, that was St. Paul's," said I, joining in the conversation with shipboard freedom.

"That so! Wasn't no name over the door."

My speaking to him was the cue for the man who had been conversing to go away. I think that he knew when he had had enough, but as I needed exercise I determined to pump my new acquaintance.

"Been over long?"

"I was two weeks in Europe."

"Well, what's good enough for you?"

"What you mean?"

"Is New York good enough for you?"

"Oh, yes. Didn't know what you meant, you put it so sudden. Yes; N' York 's good enough for me."

"Know New York pretty well, don't you?"

"Well, I stopped overnight there on my way from Ochre Point to the steamer. My home's in Ochre Point, New Jersey. I think N' York lays over anything in Europe."

"Then you didn't become denationalized by your trip?"

"Demoralized, you mean. Dear, no! I've knocked around Ochre Point too long for that."

"What countries did you visit in Europe?"

"Brussels and Belgium and Paris and England."

I really felt sorry for him, but I couldn't help saying:

"Which did you like better, Belgium or Brussels?"

"Well, to tell the truth, I didn't see much of Brussels, as I was awful tired when I got there, and I went to sleep right after breakfast, and I never woke up till it was supper-time, and I went to Belgium next day. But

"I JUST SAT IN MY ROOM AND READ IT."—P. 51.

I didn't find much to see there, so I went in the afternoon to Paris."

I regret that I did not find out just what he meant by Belgium, but his mention of Paris suggested a question:

"Paris hit you pretty hard, didn't it?"

"Well, now, it did. I was there four days, and I saw quite a good deal of Paris, although two days it rained, and I didn't go out. I had a book that a feller recommended on board ship, and he lent it to me, and asked me to return it to him in Paris. He gave me his address. Well, it was called 'Smiles and Grins,' and say, that book is full of the most comical sayings. I just sat in my room and read it those rainy days so's I could return it to him, and then when I went to his hotel I found he'd gone the day before. But it was great. I'll lend it to you, if you want."

I told him I never could read on board ship, as it required too much concentration.

"Well, I think this book's easier than some. I didn't mind the weather, on account of the book; and then, it is by an American, and, I tell you, we know how to write."

"But I should think that you would have hated to give up so much time to reading, when your stay was so limited."

"Well, I *am* kind of sorry now; but, you see, when I'm home somehow I don't much care to read, so I just pitched in. Have a cigarette?"

"No, thanks; I don't smoke. What did you think of the Exposition?"

"Well, I didn't see the inside of it. You see, I traveled with a fellow from Rahway, who wanted to run down into the French country to see a friend of his, and he offered to pay my way if I'd go, because he couldn't speak any French, and neither could I, and he said it would make us feel less lonesome."

"Was it a pretty place you went to? Real country or only suburban?"

Mr. Symon cackled. "Well, now you've got me. I really don't remember. It had one of those French names, and when we got down there it was so hot that I just waited for him in the station and read the paper."

"What paper was that?" I asked.

"Oh, the Ochre *Point of View*. Oh, I do remember that place. It was Fountainbloo."

"Fontainebleau!" I gasped. "And you didn't leave the station! Didn't your friend tell you you'd missed something?"

"No; you see, he had the wrong address, and he spent all his time looking for his friend, and he said he nearly got lost in a piece of woods, and he came to a place that looked like a castle, but he didn't go in, as he knew his friend didn't live there."

"What's your friend's name?"

"Jasper Dinkey."

I felt that that was just what a Jasper Dinkey would do. Names have a potent

influence on actions. "But next day why didn't you go to the Exposition?"

"Why, you see, I had to buy my return ticket, and that took a whole morning; and then I went up to my lodgings, and I just took off my coat and vest and collar, and lighted a cigarette, and then I took off my shoes and stockings, and you bet I was comfortable until it was time for me to go out and hunt up a supper. I tell you, a man can be comfortable in Paris."

"Do you speak French? How did you make out about supper? Wasn't it dinner?"

"Well, I suppose so; but I always have supper at home, so I call it that. No, I don't speak French—only 'ooey.'"

"What is 'ooey'?" said I, puzzled.

"Why, 'ooey' is the French for 'yes, if you please.'"

"Well, if you didn't know any more French than that, how did you get along?"

"Well, a French gentleman did tell me

"I DON'T SPEAK FRENCH."—P. 54.

another French word that means 'some of that,' and I always sat down next to someone who was eating, and when the waiter came I said, 'Ooey, kelk-dee-selar,' and pointed at the plate, and they generally understood right away. But it was expensive."

"Why expensive?"

"Because," said Mr. Symon, tossing his cigarette overboard, "sometimes the man next to me was eating an expensive dish. Once it cost me ten francs for supper, and all I meant to eat was a franc and a half. They said things were higher in the Exposition."

"So you came away without seeing the Exposition."

"Yes, I did," said Mr. Symon, lighting another cigarette. "But" (puff) "I've seen" (puff, puff) "our Waverly Fair, and a feller told me the only difference was that our fair is smaller."

"It is smaller, that's very true. Did you go to London?"

"Yes; I told you so."

"Sick on the Channel?"

"Well, now you've got me. I was sick on the boat, but I didn't hear the name. Guess it was the *Channel.* Oh, say, I saw one picture in France in the only place I did go to. It was about a young woman going to be burned up. In a big, roundish kind of building with pictures painted into the walls. That was the day I went to Fountainbloo."

"Was it the Panthéon?"

"Somethin' about a panther, I think. I asked a feller that could talk English what it was all about, and he told me it was about Jonah of the Ark; some of Noah's folks, I suppose. He said it was a she, though the name was Jonah. He seemed to know all about her, although he'd only come that day; but then, he was traveling with a party, so I suppose some of 'em told him. I thought such goings-on wouldn't be allowed in these times. He said they were going to burn her because she wouldn't go into the

ark, but just as the flames were beginning to scorch her the flood came and drowned all the people who were torturing her."

"Then what became of her?"

"Well, I think an angel rescued her; but I couldn't find out, because the big crowd the feller was with all tramped out of the building, and he ran after them. It was one of those traveling parties."

"Cook's tourists?"

"That's it. They seemed in a hurry. I was sorry, because there were other pictures about the same girl. One where she is in a garden, and an angel you can see through is coming to her. I wondered whether it was the angel that saved her from being drowned after the flood put the fire out. You see, the angel picture was on the right, so it must have come after the flood-and-fire picture. All the paintings in that place were pretty slick, I thought."

"I believe they're considered so." The preparatory dinner-bugle blew, and as I was

at the first table I hurried my young friend on to London. "So you say you went to England. What did you think of English scenery?"

"Well, to tell the truth, I was awful sleepy, and just as soon as I got aboard the train at Dover I leaned back and went to sleep, and I never heard a sound until we reached London. My friend said it was real pretty, only the fields were full of red weeds that he thought must be bad for cattle."

"Poppies?"

"Yes, I think that's what he said."

"Well, what did you see in London?"

"Say, I want to tell you about that. A feller said that if I wanted to see a sight I must go to this Hyde Park and watch the rich folks ride by on Rotten Street."

"Rotten Row," I said, correcting him.

"Well, street or road is all one. I went there and sat on one of the park benches, and I saw three men go by in a half an hour.

"ONCE IT COST ME TEN FRANCS FOR SUPPER."—P. 55.

I tell you, I was disgusted. Why, there's more ridin' in Ochre Point in summer."

"You went at the wrong time. Well, which did you like best, Paris or London?"

"N' York 's better'n both of 'em, and for solid comfort Ochre Point aint so far behind. I only crossed because my chum wanted me to go. You see, father died last year, and he left me with all the money I want, and I hadn't anything to do at home, so I thought I'd travel. A feller that comes to Ochre Point in the summer said it would enlarge my mind."

"Well, do you think it has?"

"Well, there's no telling, but I guess I've enlarged it enough if traveling's the only thing that 'll do it. Ochre Point is good enough for me, for there aint any sights there that I feel bound to see. Now, I'm awful glad that was St. Paul's that I went to, because I knew an I-talian chap who summered at Ochre Point, and he said if I went to Rome I must be sure to see St.

Paul's. I guess the laugh's on him. Funny, how ignorant those I-talians are."

"Didn't he say St. Peter's?" I asked.

"Whyee, so he did! Well, I *am* sorry, because I made sure he'd never heard of that whispering-gallery right in the church, and I was going to have fun with him. Excuse *me,* and I'll go tell my chum."

"There's Only One Noo York."

I SAW Thomas J. Brownley four times altogether, counting the ocean voyage as one time. He was about forty-five years old, smooth-shaven, and with blue eyes that looked keen, and yet seemed to have latent softness in them. His nose was aquiline, and I think he could not have passed for anything but an American, no matter how far he strayed from his beloved "Noo York."

The third day out I came on him softly swearing to himself as he leaned over the forward rail of the hurricane-deck. He grunted inarticulately as I came up and halted beside him. I said:

"Morning. Lost anything?"

"Yes, *sir!*" said he. "Lost my peace of mind. What a curious sort of fool I was

ever to take my doctor's advice and leave Noo York! Gee-orge Harry! here's three days have passed since I left home, and Lord only knows how many things have happened that I know nothing about. I don't know whether they've renominated McKinley or not, I don't know whether my clerks have busted my business or not. And what do I get in place of it? A lot of meals cooked different from what I'm used to, and me half sick for nearly a day——"

"Well," I interjected, "you're lucky not to have been sick longer. Some of the passengers haven't shown up yet."

"Wouldn't have been sick a minute at home." His eyes looked over the "desolate waste of waters" as if they were trying to see the Statue of Liberty. "Waves, waves, nothing but waves! Not a tree in sight! I was a fool, that's what I was."

"But I thought you said your doctor prescribed the sea-voyage?"

"Oh, that's only because he thought I

was working too hard. I wasn't working any harder than I always have worked. Gee-orge Harry! I'd rather *work* myself to death than loaf myself to death. Here 'tis three days, and I haven't done a stroke of work. What's worse, I haven't felt like working. That's what knocks. When I get home I may find I'm good for nothing but loafing around, like a fellow whose father was self-made. Dry-goods business may have gone higher'n a kite, for all I know. And they tell me we're likely to have six or seven days' more of this monotonous trip. If I could only *sleep* all the time, but, cuss it all! I can't even sleep all *night*, the berths are so short. Wish 't I'd arranged to come back on the next steamer; but I was talked into doing London and the Paris Exposition."

"But you'll surely find much to interest you in London."

"Oh, will I? You don't know me, then. I'm an American from 'way back, and

there's only one Noo York. That's where I was born and brought up. What 'll I find to interest me in a town that is ten years behind our metropolis—a town that has no American noospapers? I hate picture-galleries, and I'm glad to say I've forgotten the little history I ever knew, so their towers and their abbeys won't take my time for two minutes. No, sir. Well, then, what else is there for me to see?" And he stretched his closed lips as much as to say, "I've stumped you."

"Their parks," I ventured.

"Their parks!" he sneered. "And I live two blocks from Central Park! Parks! I walk through our park every afternoon on the way home from my store. I get all the *park* I want, and American park at that. I don't want to look at any behind-the-times English park."

"Well, you can study the people."

"Study the people! Study the people! I'll get enough people-study on this *voyage*

"NOSING AROUND AMONG A LOT OF MONUMENTS."—P. 65.

to last me a lifetime. I hate people *as* such. People are all right to do business with, but to watch 'em eat or to watch 'em watching the waves,—those *cussed* old waves,—well, you're welcome to it. It's enough to hear 'em talk, without studying them, particularly the women—a lot of silly women that think they're having a good time now, and talk about expecting to have a better time in England nosing around among a lot of monuments and graveyards and towers. Haven't they any country of their own? If they have so much time, why don't they travel in their own country? This is the first vacation I've had in twenty-two years, and I'd have gone out to California if that cussed doctor hadn't told me I needed a sea-voyage. But these silly women trapesing around Europe, and not knowing America!" He was silent a minute, and then he went on: "Gee-orge Harry! I wish I knew whether McKinley was renominated. Think of being without a noospaper for

three days, three whole days! Aint it a *crime?*"

"Why, I'm rather glad to be able to shut down on newspapers for a while," said I.

"Were you *born* in America?" said Thomas J. Brownley, as if he doubted it.

"Why, yes; and I expect to like America better than ever when I get back; but I like a change——"

"Well, I don't. I began life as a clerk in the house I'm head partner of just thirty-two years ago, and every day—every day except Sunday—I've come down to that office at eight in the morning, and it's a heap more fun than see-sawing up and down in a steamer, with nothing to do but sleep and smoke and talk and eat—— There's the bugle. Now I've got to try and eat a lot of dishes that I wouldn't know if I met 'em in my back yard. You at the *second* table, are you? Wish I was. Well, there's only one Noo York, and don't you forget it."

The next time I held an extended con-

versation with Thomas J. Brownley was while I was in London. I saw his tall, thin figure moving nervously along the Strand on a very hot day. He seemed to be looking for something.

"Hello, brother!" he said as soon as he saw me. "Gee-orge Harry! but it's good to see an American face. You look as if you could really talk American. These people try hard enough, but it gives a Noo-Yorker a pain to hear their accent. Say, I'm hunting for some American soda-water. Their blamed tepid water will drive me to drink, although I'm a temperance man. Say, did you ever see so much drunkenness in your life? But if I could get a good old drink of American soda-water, ice-cold, I'd feel as if I could last. Isn't this city awful?"

Candor compelled me to tell Mr. Brownley that I was having the time of my life.

"I don't understand how you can. You *look* like a good American."

I laughed, and suggested that we ride on

a bus to a place that I knew of where real American soda was dispensed, and we climbed to the top of a white bus.

"This makes me tired," said he, when we were seated. "I used to be ashamed of the Noo York horse-cars, but when I get back I'll ride on 'em for three or four days so's not to be too startled by the cables and trolleys and the elevated. Fifty years behind the times. I said before I came here that they were ten years behind, but it's fifty. But"—and here his voice took on a very serious tone—"I don't understand you fellows. I've met two or three men like you that say they're having a good time. You seem to be wide-awake. How can you have a good time in any place but America? Why, every minute I'm thinking how much better we do it all in Noo York. Look at that conductor. No uniform. Seems fairly immoral to be collecting fares with no uniform. And they tell me you can't open the bus windows. Why, there'd be a riot in

"I THOUGHT THAT THE SODA WAS PRETTY GOOD."—P. 69.

Noo York if they tried to keep car windows shut. And have you seen their noospapers? Hardly a line about New York, and that little all wrong. One of 'em says Hanna's likely to be nominated on the Democratic ticket. Wouldn't that jar you? I always heard that English papers were deadly dull, but I never knew it until I tried to read one. Nothing about Noo York that's worth printing, and yet Noo York 's the only place where anything happens. If I didn't have my passage engaged, I'd go back to-morrow without seeing Paris."

Just then we came to the soda-water place, and we descended. I thought that the soda was pretty good; at any rate, it was cool; but Brownley's expression of contempt as he set it down was worth crossing the ocean to see.

"I wouldn't know it for soda-water if I met it in my back yard. What a country, what a God-forsaken country, this is! And I left Noo York for it!"

As I had an engagement, I left Mr. Brownley outside of the soda-water "emporium," and I did not see him again until we met on the Boulevard des Italiens in Paris.

I saw him first, and as I'd taken something of a fancy to the homesick and disgruntled fellow, I called out: "Aren't you rather far from New York, Thomas J. Brownley?"

He turned, and I thought he would weep for joy.

He shook my hand with both of his, and looked as happy as if Governor's Island had suddenly loomed up before him.

After his first delight had subsided and we were sitting together in front of a café, he said: "Well, isn't this a sad sight, this city?"

Again I had to admit that I was having a good time in spite of a somewhat limited stock of French.

He rested his head on his hands and shook

it from side to side. "Oh, how can you say so! Why, I thought I hated London, but I give you my word I'd be glad to be back there to hear their attempts at the American language. Did you ever hear such a makeshift for talk as this is? Wouldn't it drive you to crime? And such sights as I've seen since I came here! Why, sir, I never blushed so much in my life as I have here. Filthiest people I ever saw or heard of. Look at the things they sell——"

"To Americans," I said.

"Don't believe it. Why, I wouldn't run the chance of being found dead with the things they sell on the streets. And I can tell by their looks that what they are saying to each other isn't fit to print. A dirty nation on its last legs. London was paradise to this, and I didn't know it. Why, sir, when I go back to take my steamer I'm going to write a letter of apology to one of those miserable London papers, telling them I hadn't seen Paris when I passed through

London. Oh, it's the language that does it. No one can get away from the English language and expect to be worth anything as a man. Here, this coffee's on me, but *you* talk to the waiter. I haven't learned a word of their tongue, thank God! and I wouldn't on principle, if I lived here all my days. But I've had an awful time trying to get my English understood. My throat is 'most worn out shouting, and still they don't understand. And the insolent cabmen that try to run over you! I grabbed one horse by the head yesterday, and I made him run up on the sidewalk, and I said to the miserable driver: 'I'm from Noo York, and you can't run *me* down as you do these undersized Frenchmen.'"

"What did he say?" I asked.

"I don't believe he actually said anything. He chattered like a crow in a cornfield, but no one *could* talk as fast as he pretended to. He just wabbled his tongue at me, but I'd shown him that Americans can't be imposed

"HE CHATTERED LIKE A CROW IN A CORN-FIELD."—P. 72.

upon, and I came away. Well, sir, I'm awfully glad I met you, and I'm glad to meet any American. Gee-orge Harry! if France had men like ours she wouldn't be going downhill so fast. I give her three years and six weeks to get to perdition. Good-night, and come and see me in Noo York."

We exchanged cards, and I found out on what steamer he was going to return. I told myself that I ought not to miss the landing of such a devoted patriot, and as I reached New York first I was able to gratify my desire.

He was the first man to run down the gang-plank, and, as it happened, I was the only man to meet him. Before he saw me he bowed his head for a moment, and I believe he was offering up a prayer of thankfulness at having landed once more in "God's country." When he saw me he sprang at me and shook my arm so hard that it was lame next day.

"Thank God! I'm among *real* people

once more. Oh, what a bad dream my trip has been! Now I want you to listen to me while I say it. There's only one country in the world, and that's America, and there's only one Noo York, and that's right here, and if the good Lord gives me health and strength of mind and body I'll never be such a fool as to go to a foreign shore again. Who's nominated on the Democratic ticket?"

Too Much Boy

I MET a gentleman on the steamer on my return from Europe who spent all his time in the smoking-room, smoking good cigars and looking neither to the right hand nor to the left, but staring straight ahead into vacancy. He looked to me like a genial man, but he never spoke to anyone, and my curiosity was excited, the more so as I understood that he was the father of the young bunch of mischief who provided excitement in large packages for the passengers all day long, and whose mother was aging hour by hour owing to the weight of her responsibilities.

On the sixth day out I sat down in front of him at a card-table and offered him a cigar. He surprised me by accepting it, and when he thanked me his eye warmed

and I felt that he was a man of flesh and blood.

"You don't believe in getting tanned?" I ventured, seeing that his face, on account of his protracted stay in the smoking room, was as white as a bank clerk's just before vacation.

He hesitated a minute and then, blowing out a huge cloud of smoke, he said: "I believe only in one thing: if you want to enjoy your travels leave your child at home."

I am sometimes uncomfortably frank, and I now said:

"Your child doesn't seem to trouble *you* half as much as he troubles his mother."

"No," said he in a dead-and-alive tone, "he doesn't trouble me any more, except that he keeps me a prisoner in this gloomy room. Ordinarily when I travel I spend every minute that I can out of doors, but I told Mrs. Maberly—I'm Mr. Maberly, as I suppose you and everybody else on board

knows—I told Mrs. Maberly that the child had taken ten years out of my life on the voyage over, and in Paris, when I took entire responsibility, and that unless I could be free on the voyage back I'd land in New York a doddering idiot. That's why I'm here. That's why my wife never allows the child on this deck. *She's* sunburned enough, but, poor woman, her hair is growing gray, although it was black as a coal when we left New York."

I murmured something sympathetic and he heaved a sigh and went on:

"Why, sir, the only time that I had any pleasure in Paris, although it may sound unfeeling to say so, was when Tom was lost in the sewers."

I could not repress an exclamation, and Mr. Maberly said:

"I surprise you; but if you had had to put up with the exuberance of spirits that that child possesses you would have welcomed the relief also, no matter what it cost. For

a ten-year-old he is the biggest cluster of mischief that ever was picked."

"Well, how about the sewer escapade?" said I, fearing that Mr. Maberly was branching off.

"Why, you see, one Tuesday we obtained a permit from the prefect of police to visit the sewers, and, together with a crowd of some fifty or more, we descended into the depths. Did you visit them?"

I told him that a visit to the sewers was a pleasure yet to come.

"Well, you go down a flight of steps and find a train of platform trolleys awaiting you. Mrs. Maberly and Tom got into the first one. She had to because he ran ahead of the crowd and almost fell beneath the car. That was the last I saw of him for some time. We ran a mile or so through the immense vaults, wonderfully clean, yet not the place for an ordinary outing, and at last we debarked and walked along a passageway until we came to an underground river, ac-

tually the sewer. Here there was a train of boats hitched together and pulled by men who walked on towpaths. I thought that Tom was with his mother, and Mrs. Maberly thought that he was with me, but he wasn't with either of us.

"When we emerged from the sewer I said, 'Where's Tom?' and Mrs. Maberly turned white and ran back and called him. He hadn't come back with us at all. She, womanlike, was for going back for him, but I said: 'Now, Mary, that boy never came to any harm yet. I know a good thing when I see it. Let's celebrate our liberty until he turns up.' But you know what a mother is. Nothing would do but she must try to get the boy. She speaks French, and she said to the guide: 'My little boy is left behind. He was in the passage at the end of the trolley line, but I don't think he got into the boat."

"The guide shrugged his shoulders and said: 'I'm very sorry, but the trip is over for to-day. On next Tuesday, if you have a

permit from the prefect of police, you can go through again and hunt for him. Meantime, never.'

"I understood French, although I do not speak it. 'There,' said I; 'now you see, my dear, you have run up against French red tape, and you might as well rest easy. On Tuesday next we will go about this thing in an orderly manner. We will hunt up the boy with a permit from the prefect. Nothing will be gained by bucking against red tape. Meantime let us celebrate our liberty.'

"But you know what mothers are. She called me heartless, and said her boy would be eaten alive by the rats. 'Nonsense,' said I; 'if the rats plan anything like that it is because they don't know Tom. More likely he'll eat them. He asked me yesterday if I knew of a restaurant where he could get some horse meat.'

"Will you believe it, I might as well have talked to a dead wall. Nothing must do but a visit to the prefect in order to get a special

permit. The prefect was out, but his subordinate was there—a very polite young man with little mouselike eyes and gleaming teeth. He heard the facts and then said he was very sorry, but he could not issue a permit in the absence of the prefect, and he doubted if the prefect himself would do it either, because, the city being full of Exposition visitors, they could not allow a person to make more than one excursion through the sewers.

"'But my little boy is there!' said my wife. 'I beg madame's pardon,' said the subordinate with a polite shrug of the shoulders, 'but if the little boy is now in the sewer he has overstayed the time permitted and has laid himself open to punishment by the authorities.' He pulled down a volume from a shelf and quickly turned to the place he wanted.

"'For staying overtime in the sewers of Paris, a fine of ten francs for the first hour and fifteen francs for every succeeding hour

is imposed. Children under ten are fined five francs the first hour and ten francs for each succeeding hour.'

"'Madame will see,' said he, 'that such a law is necessary, for the sewers of Paris are so inviting, so beautifully clean, that children like them as a playground, and others as a place of promenade. Your little boy has broken the law, and on Tuesday next, when the visitors go down, I will send an officer along to look for him, and he will ascertain the time that he has been there, and upon payment of the fine he will be restored to you.'

"At this point I broke in and said to my wife: 'Now, Mrs. Maberly, this is surely providential. You have repeatedly said that you could not enjoy a minute of your stay in Paris on account of Tom's pranks. I dare say that he will be perfectly well cared for in the sewer. While he is enjoying himself at his father's expense in the sewer we will see Paris. We've been here a week, and yet

I can't recall a single thing I've seen on account of my worry over that boy. He's safe and sound and underground, in a good sense, so let's celebrate our freedom.'

"Well, Mrs. Maberly saw that I was talking horse sense, and she asked the officer whether he would be cared for in the sewer. 'But yes, madame,' said he; 'he is the guest of the sewer. He will be fed by the guardians of the sewer. From time to time he will advance to the outlets and enjoy a view of the Seine and see the passing boats. For the rest, if he is a good boy the guardians of the sewer will make much of him and he will enjoy himself. No harm can come to anyone in the sewers of Paris. Come back next Tuesday morning and remind me of the boy's absence and'—here he bowed very low and showed his teeth and snapped his eyes, and looked so like a mouse that Mrs. Maberly shuddered—'and I will personally see to it that your boy is restored—after the fine is paid.'

"'Will there be extra charges for his food?' I asked.

"'Not at all. He is the guest of the sewer. He should not have stayed, but now that he is there French hospitality will see to it that he does not starve.'

"Well, you can't imagine what a feeling of freedom flooded me. I said to Mrs. Maberly: 'We have earned this holiday. Remember that the captain of the *Landslide* asked us to chain the boy in the cabin, recollect how at each hotel we have been requested to keep the boy away from every room in the house except his own bedroom, and let us go to Margueries for supper.'

"Then we left our names, our ages, our religion, our color, our birthplace, the number of years we had been married, and our politics, with the mouse-eyed man, and, it being seven o'clock, we took a cab to Margueries', where we had fried sole and other delicacies, and where I had a delightful time. But I could hear Mrs. Maberly sigh

every few minutes and say: 'Poor lonely little boy. I was wicked. Alone with the rats! Down with red tape!'

"Our hotel was in a quiet square just back of the Bibliothèque Nationale, and so long did I linger over that quiet, boyless dinner that it was nine o'clock when we arrived there. We found the little park black with people, and firemen with a scaling ladder were just placing it against our hotel.

"'What is the trouble?' asked I of a man, in elemental French. He shrugged his shoulders and pointed up, and there, on a cornice of the hotel, a perfectly inaccessible place, stood Tom, shouting with glee and saying, 'Never touched me!' when firemen tried to reach him from the windows beneath."

"How did he get out of the sewer?" I asked of Tom's father.

"Why, the rogue had left the sewer with us, but had run on ahead, and when we missed him he was on his way to the hotel.

I'll never know all the dreadful things he did there that afternoon, but the firemen rescued him at last, and then I spanked him and tied him to his bed and took a train by the Gare du Nord for the country, and spent a happy night in the middle of a cornfield. And next day I engaged passage by this steamer and shifted all responsibility to Mrs. Maberly. That's why my trip is a failure. That's why I'm the talk of the ship. That's why I have no tan. When I leave America again I will see to it that the boy is left in the orphan asylum before I sail."

"MADE ME FEEL THAT I WOULD AMOUNT TO SOMETHING."—P. 87.

The Cosmopolitanism of Mr. Powers

I AM very much influenced by the people I meet. I have talked with men and women who in five minutes, without saying a flattering word to me, have made me feel that I would amount to something if death kept away long enough, and I've always cut off my interviews with such people at an untimely period, for fear I would grow too fond of myself. There are others who make me feel idiotic. They do not tell me that they doubt the existence of my brains, but after I have talked with them a few minutes I become doddering and imbecile, and I terminate these interviews also. Then there are persons who make me feel that I am a very poor and mongrel breed of worm; they are so infinitely superior.

I never felt more worm-like or more in need of turning—as worms do, for exercise —than when I was talking with V. S. Powers, who condescended to honor with his presence the steamship that carried me over the Atlantic from New York.

His full name was Vernon Stowe Powers; but, after watching him tread the deck as if he were the owner of the ocean and had kindly given the steamship company the right of way, some wag christened him "Very Superior Powers," and the nickname stuck.

He *was* very superior to the ruck. All the rest of us were the ruck. There were several college professors and an artist or two and a hand-made millionaire, and there was one Harvard man whose ancestors to the number of four generations had been baptized in the same font of learning; but they were all ruck.

The first thing that suggested his superiority was his sampling of his food. Those

of us who were not seasick had ravenous appetites, and we were really not in a position to judge of the worth of the meals set before us. The sea winds had bottled up dozens of the "best sauce." But Mr. Powers never allowed his hunger to get the better of his critical faculty, and he made us all feel that we were not used to anything much at home by dabbling at his oatmeal, pecking at his meat, daintily sipping his coffee, his nostrils distended like those of an Arabian charger; and when he had finished his meal,—which was always long before anybody else had,—he would push his plate away, and leave the table with a sigh and a fervent ejaculation, "Thank Heaven, another meal is finished!" It was a new kind of grace, and one that he never, to my knowledge, omitted at any meal, and he did not miss one from port to port.

I once said to him: "Too bad you didn't take one of the ocean greyhounds, where they make more of a specialty of the table."

"My dear fellow," said he, and I felt myself assuming worm-like proportions at once, "I have probably tried every line that crosses this stream, and I merely took this for the novelty of it. The fact is, to be quite candid, I engaged passage on this steamer at twenty-four hours' notice because I could not stand America any longer."

This declaration and his somewhat English hat, and the English cut of his clothes made me certain that he was a native of Albion, so I said:

"Oh, then you were disappointed in your visit. You must be glad to be slowly getting back to the delicious English cookery."

Even a worm can be sarcastic, and that's what I meant to be, but he did not see it.

"Oh, I don't like English cookery. *Don't,* don't think that of me. The French are the only cooks, of course, as years of residence in Paris has taught me. But I'm not English. I'm a cosmopolite, and I was born in New Haven."

"Indeed, I come from Hartford way myself," said I, glad to find a man from my own State, even if he were fleeing from its borders with gladness.

"Yes, I was born in New Haven, and I know that little crowd from A to Z," said he. "Petty, petty, petty," he continued, with one of the sourest expressions I ever saw. He was, for the moment, the personification of a lemon, and I fancied that his face assumed a yellowish tinge.

"What's petty?" I asked as we left the taffrail, on which we had been leaning, and began to promenade the decks together.

"New Haven," said he. "Petty and narrow and provincial. I've just been back there on legal business, and they are leading the same lives they led when I was last there, ten years ago."

I suggested that New Haven people were not peculiarly gifted as to the number of their lives; that they had not a feline apportionment, and that once begun, they would

be apt to lead the only life they had until the leading-string was parted by time.

"No; but everyone is so content with his little finite self and his little finite way. They seem to forget that there is a great world outside New Haven——"

"Hartford, for instance," said I.

"Yes; Hartford is not nearly so narrow. But it's all touched by the same insular spirit. New England is an aggregation of hubs——"

"And where there are hubs there are always wheels, I suppose you mean, isms and the like."

He did not smile at my anæmic jest.

"You see," said he, "to one who has traveled, as I have, to every quarter of the globe, this belief of America in her destiny is mortifying. When I am in Europe I forget America. I actually *forget* her for weeks at a time."

He looked at me as if he did not expect me to credit him, but I did.

"Now, when I'm in America," he continued, "I don't forget England or the Continent—they make themselves felt; but with America, poor, new, crude America, out of sight is out of mind."

"Don't you believe in a great future for America in her art and her music and her literature and her architecture?"

He looked at me as a man looks at a baby who has upset its pap.

"Some years ago, Sydney Smith, I think it was, said: 'Who reads an American book?" If he were living now I could truthfully tell him that *I* don't. For me there is only one literature, and that is German. Just as France is the great cook, so Germany is the great litterateur."

I ventured to say, in as much voice as a worm could muster, that it seemed to me that we were holding our own in all the arts, and that probably the coming century would see America the foremost musical nation. I wanted to see how he'd take such a bold

statement. He took it hard. I thought he would faint.

"Not really! Is that your honest opinion?" said he, after weathering the shock.

I wished that worms had more backbone, because I felt myself writhing, but I managed to whisper something about the great composers of the future being Americans, and that perhaps some of them were out of their cradles already.

"Oh, my poor fellow, what a hopeless provincial you are! Americans have a certain mimetic ability; so has the ape: but America will never lead except in the realm of mechanics. Now, I have heard all the music of all the lands: the wild, barbaric strains of the Dahomeyans, the hideous discords of the Japanese, the rude melodies of the Fuegians, as well as the harmonies of all the civilized nations, and to me Russia is the high priest of modern music. But, do you know, I rather like your standing up for

American music. This is your first voyage, I believe. Oh, you have so much, so very much to learn, my dear fellow. American music does not carry across the waters. Europe never hears it. That's what counts, you know. It isn't what Americans think of themselves, but what Europeans think of Americans. *I* know what they think of us, and *I* think like them because *I* am more a cosmopolite than an American, in spite of the accident of my birth."

"Where were your parents accidentally born?" I asked—which was rather bold of a worm.

"Oh, my ancestors have been Americans since 1639," said he, and it amused me to see that he was proud of it, cosmopolite though he was. In fact, he was proud of anything that appertained to Vernon Stowe Powers in any degree.

Just then the orchestra struck up. Now, it is true that the band was not much above the level of a Staten Island ferry-boat harp-

and-violin duo, but most of us discounted that fact, and steeled our ears against the cacophony, and tried to remember that the young men were working hard for their tips, and took this unmusical way of doing it.

But Mr. Powers distended his nostrils until they reminded me of the india-rubber man, so-caoutchouckian were they.

"That *isn't* the Boston Symphony orchestra, *is* it?" said I laughingly.

"It certainly isn't the Berlin orchestra. I can't speak of the American orchestras, except by hearsay. But isn't it an outrage to put upon us? As if it wasn't enough to give us food that a mendicant would spurn, they must torture us with such discords as this. It turns my ears inside out. And such stuff as they play! I suppose that's some of your American music."

"No; that's the nocturne from Mendelssohn's 'Midsummer Night's Dream,'" said I, with a worm's glee.

Most men would have been squelched by this. I would have worked down into the soil to stay there until the next wet morning brought me out as bait, but he never turned a hair.

"I knew it wasn't Russian," he said, and said it in such a way that I felt he had somehow turned the tables on me. "Very Superior" Powers he had.

Long before the voyage was over the passengers got up a round-robin, couched in respectful terms, asking him if he wouldn't select an extra fine life-preserver and jump overboard, which would be an easy way of avoiding the music and the meals and the passengers. They wanted me to hand it to him, but I lacked the presence. So he stayed on board until we made port; but there was not a moment that he did not show how superior he was to anyone else. He hated to praise anything that had been praised by another. Once a passenger who was standing by his side, looking at the moonlight on the

water, said: "It's a beautiful ocean, isn't it?"

"Oh, I suppose so," said he with a sigh of ennui. "I've crossed it so often that its beauty palls on me. And it hasn't the picturesque quality of the Pacific or even the Indian Ocean. I might almost say that I know every wave on those oceans, but they never lose their charm for me; but the Atlantic, this trip especially, is so infernally quiet, don't you know. I like to cross in a series of tempests. I'm generally the only one on board, except the captain, who isn't seasick. But of course this old tub wouldn't stand heavy seas. Five days more of it. Fancy!"

The other passenger said that he was getting a good deal of fun out of the process of studying human nature.

"Human nature? In this crowd! Well, there is human nature and human nature, but I prefer to study it in the world's great capitals, Rome and London and Moscow.

"I SUPPOSE YOU ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE PARIS EXPOSITION?"—P. 99.

These poor yokels, who are so easily pleased, haven't any human nature worth talking about. A man who is easily pleased sets himself down as commonplace at once. Now, when I am pleased it's because something very much worth while has happened, and this voyage was not worth while. I never would have taken it if I hadn't been so anxious to get away from the irritations of complacent America."

Then the other passenger left, and two minutes later I found him kicking a coil of rope all by himself, and he never knew that I saw him. But I had overheard the conversation, and I sympathized with his feelings.

The last day of the trip a dear old lady said to Mr. Powers quite innocently: "I suppose you're looking forward to the Paris Exposition?"

I didn't hear his answer, but I dare say that he told her that there was nothing in the Paris Exposition to tempt him; that he

had seen one on the Congo in '85 that laid over anything that Paris could do. The old lady looked squelched, and he left her and walked away with his head in the air.

That day I came upon him at dinner,—he was always the first to come to table, and the first to go away,—and before he could wither me with his glance, I said briskly: "By the way, are you going to the Exposition?"

He shook his head pityingly for some seconds before he answered me.

"You don't know me, evidently. Do I *look* like a man who would visit a mere exposition? I'm not a Western ranchman or a New England farmer, or a French peasant who is crazy to see the world for the first time. I know the world, and it is very small. I was a mere youngster when the Centennial Exhibition occurred in Philadelphia, but I knew better than to go to it, even then. Instinct is a great thing, and I have it. It

saves me a lot of bother. Why should I join a crowd of gaping wanderers from every country in the world in order to look at a lot of breadstuffs and fabrics, and cheap pictures and hastily constructed buildings? Oh, no; life is too short for such childish pleasures. I hate crowds. Every self-respecting man hates crowds, because crowds are bound to be made up of the riffraff. There may be such a thing as a crowd of gentlemen, but it does not last long. The instinct of each member of it is to get away, and that dissolves the crowd."

"Yes; but you can go early in the morning and avoid the crowd," said a man opposite.

"I value my mornings too much," said he, dilating his nostrils. "Besides, an exposition is a rather childish enjoyment for one who has been everywhere and seen everything. Why should I look on a painted panorama of Egypt when I have sailed down the Nile, or gaze at locomotives from Amer-

ica when I have just gladly shaken her iron-filings off my feet? No; my pleasures are loftier ones." He pushed his plate away from him in a cosmopolite way. "Thank Heaven, the last meal is finished!" And so saying, he left the room.

It happened that I did not see him again in the bustle of departure. I thought of him many times, however, and always as being engaged in some very superior occupation: chatting with the Czar, or going on picnics with Tolstoi, or pacing the Russian steppes alone; for somehow I judged that he had chosen Russia to be dignified by his footsteps. Therefore I was much surprised to find him one evening at the Exposition in the crowd outside one of the little theaters in the Rue de Paris. I could not understand it. I looked around at those who surrounded him to see if, perchance, they were also cosmopolitans. No. There was a Turk, a German couple, evidently peasants, a Japanese actor, a Russian Jew, several French-

men, and some American "Cook's," who only waited a moment and then pressed feverishly on, as is their wont—not a cosmopolite in the crowd except Vernon Stowe Powers.

I could not imagine why he had changed his mind and come to the Exposition after all, but, for various reasons, I did not discover myself to him. He had evidently risen far above the crowd and would be in no mood to converse with a worm.

But while I stood somewhat back of him, enjoying the pleasantries of the actors on the little balcony, who, with true Gallic ease and grace, invited the populace to come inside and witness the play, a Frenchman, evidently a stranger to my quondam shipmate, turned to him with a smile, and made a remark that even I understood. I looked for a condescending flow of French to be poured on the Parisian's head, with possibly an implied correction of the native's accent. But the world-traveler, the ennuied one who

had absorbed all civilizations, said, with an apologetic air:

"I don't speak French."

Could it have been Mr. Powers's first voyage, even as it was mine?

An Eastern Easter

MY uncle's name, like my own, is Robert Burns McPherson, but, unlike myself, he is not a poet. In fact, he has no profession, but being independently wealthy he delights in preparing for his relatives little surprises that sometimes take odd forms. I could not have been more than ten when he invited me to a birthday dinner at which trout formed the principal dish; and when he had helped me and I proceeded to bone my fish—a feat that I had already learnt—I found a gold eagle secreted in the interior.

It was some years after that my sister Marcella went out to the henhouse one morning (we lived in the country then) and found an upright piano almost completely filling the place. She suspected that Uncle

Bob had been at work, and when she found a note tacked on the back of the piano, saying: "For a musical girl—from one who loves her," she knew that it was a present. If she had been a little older she might have thought it was a crazy place to leave a present, but as it was she was delighted beyond all measure. It seemed to have dropped from the clouds. To be sure the hired man and a helper found it a Herculean task to get it into the house without the approved implements for moving pianos; and it was pretty well scratched before it found its way to the parlor. But when Uncle Bob came that evening and found Marcella playing it he was so happy and she was so overjoyed that my mother could not scold him for his freakishness.

He has always said that when he died he did not expect to leave anything to anybody; he preferred to give it away while he was yet alive.

So much by way of preamble. Last

spring, towards the end of Lent, my publishers brought out a book of mine called "An Eastern Easter," being a serious poem of some length. The first copy came to me while I was out, and my sister Marcella opened it, and then left it lying on the center table in the parlor. An hour or two later I came home and found it there, and without stopping to look at it—for I had already seen a copy at my publisher's—I wrapped it up and ran round the corner to give it to my dear friend Enos Dane, who was to sail next day for Europe on the Holl and America line.

He was so awfully busy packing that he did not open it either, but told me that it would be his first pleasure after the vessel started to read the book, and he would then write me a long, critical letter. Dane has been one of my kindest and yet one of my severest critics, and it is due to him that I ventured upon writing so serious a poem as "An Eastern Easter," which I may say,

without offense, is modeled after Sir Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia."

I was a little disappointed that Enos did not open the package, as I thought that they had bound the book very prettily, and I like his judgment on such matters; and I wouldn't have minded, to tell the truth, if he had asked me to read the first hundred stanzas or so. There are seven hundred in all, eight lines to a stanza, very easy-flowing, if I do say it. But that has nothing to do with what followed.

The next morning Uncle Bob dropped in while we were at breakfast, and from the twinkle in his eye I knew that he had been up to one of his "benevolences," as we call them in the family.

"Rather nice book of poems that of yours," said he.

"Oh, have you seen it?" I said, for I did not suppose the stores would have exposed it for sale so soon.

"Yes, I saw your copy yesterday after-

noon. Thought I'd give it a send-off. Didn't you find the book-marks?"

"Book-marks? No," I said. "I have hardly looked at the book, for I wanted Dane to have the first copy. You know he suggested my writing the poem."

My uncle's expression changed. "Do you mean you have given the book away without looking at it?" said he hurriedly.

"Yes, I took it round to Dane last night. You know he sails for Europe this morning——"

"Why, man, I put ten bills of a thousand each in it just for a starter to bring you good luck."

"Oh, you jewel of an uncle!" cried I, glancing at the clock.

I remember that my feeling of gratitude was mixed up with a wish that he had chosen a more conventional way of making the gift. It was nine o'clock and the *Milldam* sailed at ten. I had noticed that in the paper that morning.

I sprang from the table, and, saying "I must get that book," I was gone like a shot, stopping only to pick up my hat. I live in Harlem, and I had a little over an hour to get to the company's docks at Hoboken, on the other side of the Hudson River. I took an elevated train down to Twenty-third Street.

I may as well admit that I was not at that time so well blessed with this world's goods that I could hazard the loss of ten thousand dollars without an effort. Dane might look at the book up on deck and turn a page that concealed the bills just in time to catch a passing breeze, and then where would my money be?

At Twenty-third Street I hailed a cab, and promised the man five dollars if he would get me to the Holl pier ten minutes before the boat sailed. I happened to have ten dollars in my pocket or I should have been in a fix.

There were no incidents connected with

my getting to Hoboken, and I arrived there in time, paid my man, and rushed up the gang plank. There I found everything in confusion. I did not know the number of Dane's cabin, and no one else seemed to know. I tried to find the purser, but he was as hard to find as Dane. Hurried and worried as I was I did notice a Junoesque girl with great ox eyes, and I said to myself: "If I could have known someone like you I would not be a bachelor to-day." Such inconsequent thoughts do make the transit of a man's brain. Just then I caught a glimpse of Dane, and I followed him until he disappeared in an inside cabin. I knocked at his door; but just then the deep-throated whistle boomed and he did not hear me. I could hear the people who had come to see their friends off leaving the boat in shoals, but still I stood there and knocked. It must have been five minutes before the door opened, and then—it was not Dane at all, but a man built and dressed like him.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," said I. "I thought you were my friend Dane, who has ten thousand dollars of mine, and I was in a hurry because I'm not going across, you know."

"Going back with the pilot?" said he.

"Oh, no, I'm going now. Where can Dane be?" And I rushed up the stairs to see the lordly Hudson flowing all around me and Hoboken growing smaller every moment. I was on my way to Europe!

For a moment I was scared, but the words of the man whom I had disturbed came back to me, and I determined to act on his suggestion and go back with the pilot. Meantime I must find Dane. From bow to stern, upstairs and downstairs, or whatever you call it on board ship, I went, but no Dane appeared. Could he have missed the steamer? But no, he was the soul of punctuality. Perhaps he was indisposed and in his cabin. But where *was* his cabin?

I had an idea that there would be a blare

of trumpets and a roll of drums and no end of things when the pilot left, and I listened for the engines to slacken the while I looked for Dane; but it seems that the pilot does not need to stop the boat in order to get off.

The purser had hitherto been hidden somewhere, but now I found him and got from him a passenger list. I eagerly scanned the D's. "Dalbreger, Damen, Dayton, Eaton——" Dane was not on the passenger list! That was horrible discovery number one. And I was so sure that he had sailed on the Humbug-American Line. *The Humbug-American!* And this was the Holl and America Line! I *always* mix those two lines. I had no idea when the steamer of that line would sail. Perhaps she had left already. Oh, how idiotic I had been! Well, at any rate, I would have a pleasant sail up the bay with the pilot with a chance of getting Dane after all. It will be seen that I am philosophical. I said to the purser: "My friend is not on board."

He was busy finding places at table for various passengers who were besieging him, but he said politely, in his idiom: "Ah, that is too badly. But you will make friends on the voyage."

"But I'm not going, you know. I'm going back with the pilot."

The purser stared at me as if he thought I was a lunatic, and several of the passengers turned and looked at me with amused interest.

"The pilot departed already a half-hour ago," said he.

I dropped into a chair opposite him and said, in a helpless sort of way: "The pilot departed? Then how can I get home?"

I heard a sardonic-looking man say to his wife: "Get out and walk," and I blushed.

But the purser said: "You will make the return trip on the steamer. She shall be back in four weeks."

He seemed to think that it was quite an

ordinary thing for a man to get carried off to Europe by mistake.

"But I have only five dollars with me. I didn't come to go. I mean I came to go—I came to go back with the pilot—that is," said I, feeling that the eyes of all these people were upon me, "I came to get my money from Mr. Dane, and he is on the Humbug-American Line."

The purser said with Dutch phlegm: "You will have to see the captain. The whistle blew to get off all the people already."

And then he turned to the applicants for advantageous seats at the table, and I sat down feeling rather queer within, and for the first time noticed the motion of the vessel. I knew I was growing whiter and whiter. The purser evidently noticed it also, for he said: "Now go up and sniff some air. It is closely down here." He evidently prided himself on his English. "I will send you to the captain later."

I half expected to be put at peeling pota-

toes to work my passage. That is what I had heard they made stowaways do.

What would Marcella say? And how Uncle Bob would worry. And what would I do, with no change of linen, no vest, no overcoat or steamer rug? Then I began to feel so ill that I did not care what happened. I rushed upstairs and made my way to the side of the boat, and watched the restless waves until I was in a better frame of mind—to put it euphemistically.

I had heard that it is good to walk as much as possible when at sea, so I began to pace to and fro and gradually felt better, and at last took my stand in front of the pilot-house —if that is what they call it—and wondered what was going to be the outcome of all this.

A sweet, low voice at my side said: "Oh, look at those porpoises!" and I turned and saw my Junoesque young woman.

"Are those porpoises?" said I. "I never saw any before."

I knew that land conventions did not hold at sea, and I talked to her freely.

"Yes," said she. "Is this your first trip?"

"Well, ye-yes. I'm really not sure if it is my trip at all. You see, I didn't mean to come, and I don't know what the captain will do with me."

She looked at me in wonder for a moment, and then laughed the sweetest laugh ever heard. "Do you suppose he'll give you a life-preserver and let you swim back? But, tell me, didn't you really mean to come?" Then she looked me all over, the way a woman will, and I could see that she was thinking: "He is a little too well-dressed to be a stowaway."

When I am perturbed I have a way of getting mixed up in my speech. "Why, you see, I came after Mr. Dane's ten thousand dollars that I had in his book—that is, my uncle put ten thousand dollars in Mr. Dane's new book—that is, in my new book

that I gave to Mr. Dane, but not the ten thousand dollars. Those my uncle gave to me but, you see, he put it in my book for Mr. Dane, and so I came on board to get it back——"

"To get the book back?"

"No, to get the money back; and Mr. Dane wasn't on board because he didn't go by this line, and so here I am."

Miss Delplain—for this, as I afterwards learnt, was her name, Miss Dorothy Delplain, of Philadelphia—stared at me as if she thought I was not quite right, and just then the purser and the captain came up.

"Here he is," said the purser.

Captain Zollikoffer was a red-cheeked, jolly-looking fellow. "What is this you have done?" said he. "Did you come to see someone off?"

"No," said I, "I didn't come to see him off, because I'd seen him off last night—that is, I bade him good-by last night; but, you see, I gave him a copy of my latest book.

I'm Robert Burns McPherson, the poet, and I gave my book to Mr. Dane; but I didn't know until this morning that my uncle had put ten thousand dollars in it for me, and then I came down to the dock to recover the money, but I made a mistake in the line of steamers I thought he'd gone by—I always make that mistake about the Humbug-American Line, you know, and that is the line he's gone by—and I have only five dollars with me and the clothes on my back."

I knew that the captain had never heard of my writings, but at this point in my somewhat long monologue, the Junoesque being said:

"Oh, are you Mr. McPherson, the poet? I've been dying to meet you. Didn't you read at an authors' reading in Philadelphia?"

I assured her that I had, and had nearly fainted from fright also.

The captain suddenly burst out laughing. Something had just struck him. "Oh, and

your friend has your money, and follows us on the Humbug Line?"

I told him that that was it exactly, unless he had allowed the money to blow away.

"Such an uncle!" continued the captain. "Does he ofttimes give you bills in your books like that?"

"He has never done it before; but he put a piano in my little sister's henhouse once."

The captain suddenly looked dignified, after the manner of the Bishop of Rumtifoo. He plainly thought that I was making fun of him. "Have you anything to identify you?" said he.

I put my hand in my pocket and pulled out a rejection from the *Book-Borrower*. It was a verse of mine with a tenderly worded, printed slip to the effect that the editors felicitated themselves on the fact of having had a chance to read my poem, and it would be one of their lifelong regrets that they could not use it in the columns of their magazine.

Captain Zollikoffer took the envelope and

opened it, and put the manuscript in his pocket. Then he put on his eyeglasses and read the rejection. I don't imagine he understood what it was all about, for after he had read it through he took the manuscript out of his pocket and read the first line of that. It began:

"Oft had I thought when chilling night was gone——"

"Ooh, poetry!" said he, and put it back in the envelope with editorial promptitude. "Well," he said, "you will pay the passage both ways when you return——"

"I'll pay it when we get to Holland, if Mr. Dane has it, for he will send it to me, I'm sure."

"The Humbug liner will pass us to-night or to-morrow, and your friend will arrive a day before we reach Rotterdam. Make yourself at home. Such an uncle!" and he departed with the purser.

An elderly lady who resembled Miss Delplain now joined that young woman, and I

was presented to Mrs. Delplain, the mother of Juno.

Luckily for me, the voyage was a smooth one, and after the first day I was not sick. When it became known who I was, and how I came aboard, the passengers vied with each other in attentions to me. They lent me linen, and the purser gave me a steamer cap, and I felt that the best way to get to Europe was to do it on the spur of the moment. But I did wish that nature had not endowed me with such a thin neck. After I put away my own collar I found none that were not miles too big for me.

As for Miss Delplain, I wondered how I had been able to live without her society for the twenty-seven years that have gone to make up my life. I did not sit at her table, unfortunately, as all the desirable seats had been snapped up before my status was settled, and then I had to be content with what I got. The captain had suggested that I travel second-class; but as that would have

cut me entirely off from the fair Philadelphian's society, I told him that I would rather pay the difference when I got it.

As soon as breakfast was over each day I sought her out, and we promenaded the boat-deck or played shovel-board until it was time for bouillon. Then I always left her and talked to various passengers, so that she would not tire of my society, but as soon as luncheon was over I sat and chatted with her and her mother until it was time for them to dress for dinner. Alas! I could make no display of finer raiment, as I was limited to a sack-coat, no vest, and either my Alpine hat or the steamer cap. But in the evenings I forgot that I was not well dressed, and we sat together, just abaft of the place where the smell of cooking comes up, and talked until her mother said it was time to turn in.

If the reader has guessed that I fell in love with her, it does no credit to his perspicacity. Of course I fell in love with her, and so quickly does a friendship on board ship

ripen that we felt as if we had always known each other.

The Humbug liner—I forget her name—should have passed us the second day out, and I suppose she did so. However, on the fifth day we saw her standing still—if that's what they call it. The captain said that something must be the matter. I stood with Miss Delplain, watching her as she rose and fell on the waves. It gave me a queer feeling to reflect that here I was practically penniless, and there was ten thousand dollars of mine not five miles away—if the wind had respected the bank bills.

It seemed an opportune moment to propose, and yet, as soon as I thought of it, my tongue became almost helpless. I made several false starts, and at last I said:

"Miss Delplain, are you good at supposing?"

She said: "Why, yes, I can do anything on an ocean voyage. What do you want me to suppose?"

"Well," said I, "suppose I had those ten thousand dollars in my pocket, that are, I hope, on that steamer; suppose my book were to go like wildfire, do you suppose that—do you—would you be willing to let me place my steamer chair next to yours for the rest of our lives?"

I had no idea how she would take it, as I had never proposed before. In fact, as soon as I had said it, I wished I hadn't. But she smiled a sweeter smile than I had thought the human face capable of, and said——

But, no—now that I came to the point of writing what she said, I cannot do it. There are some things too sacred. If this were a made-up story I might, but——

I cannot express how elated and at the same time how depressed her words made me. I pressed her hand silently, and went downstairs to borrow a collar from a man who wore a number sixteen.

On my way back a fellow-passenger said:

"Hello, that steamer's signaling to us. What's the trouble?"

It did not take long for the news to become common property that the Humbug liner had broken some part of her machinery and wanted us to tow her into port. This would, of course, make us several days late; but as for me, I felt that anything that made the time of my sojourn in Miss Delplain's neighborhood possible was to be welcomed. It was so interesting watching them hitch the other steamer on behind, that I entirely forgot what steamer she was until I saw a man standing on her boat-deck who looked surprisingly like Enos Dane. He was too far away for me to shout to him, and too far for me to recognize him absolutely with the naked eye, so I sought the captain.

"Captain," said I, "I think that the man who has my money is standing on the boat-deck of that steamer. Is there any way of asking him?"

I want to put it on record that the cap-

tain was one of the most obliging men I ever saw. He immediately called his first officer, and told him to get the megaphone and ask the first officer of the other steamer whether Mr. Dane was on board.

Before the first officer could get the megaphone, the man began looking at me earnestly through a pair of field-glasses. I ran to Miss Delplain, who was sitting with her mother. "Come," said I excitedly, "I think that Mr. Dane is following us—that is, he's in the other steamer. The first officer is going to megaphone to him to find out."

As we reached the first officer, he called out: "Is Mr. Dane, of New York, on board your boat?"

The man who looked like Dane nodded his head, and the first officer of the other steamer who heard the hoarse blast of the megaphone nodded also, and picked up an old-fashioned speaking-trumpet, such as fire chiefs use. "Yes," said he. "Who wants him?"

The first officer turned to me, and I said: "Let me take the megaphone." Then I put it to my lips and shouted: "My uncle put some money in my new book of verse, and I gave the book to Mr. Dane without opening it. If you're Mr. Dane, have you the money?"

At these words, Mr. Dane, all excitement, started for the ladder that leads to the pilot-house, but the first officer, of course, prevented his committing the solecism of ascending it by coming down himself and handing the speaking-trumpet to my friend. Miss Delplain stood by my side and I fancied I could hear her heart beating. I said to her quickly: "If he has, will you?"

And she answered: "I will, if he has."

The next minute the somewhat muffled tones of Mr. Dane came through the trumpet to us—and by us, I mean all the passengers who could crowd around. He said: "I opened the book in a pretty stiff breeze—do you hear?"

"Yes, yes," I shouted, in an agony of expectancy; "go on."

"I opened the book in a gale of wind," he repeated. Dane always was a great hand to repeat unnecessarily. "And a bill blew away to sea."

Miss Delplain's hand sought mine and squeezed it sympathetically. Just then Dane was seized with a fit of sneezing, and he had to interrupt his narrative. It seemed an age before he ceased his vocal spasms. At last he went on.

"I shut the book up, then went into my cabin, and found nine other bills of a thousand each. Are they yours?"

"Yes," I shouted.

"Have you much of a library?" said he.

"That was the only book of the kind."

Then he wanted to know how I came to be on board the *Milldam*, and how the money came to be in the book. I explained everything to him, and asked the captain whether I could go after my fortune or whether he

could send a sailor. I was rather relieved when he detailed a sailor to straddle one of the hawsers and go after the money; and I was so afraid that he would fall overboard on the way back. They never could have recovered him; and he was so valuable. But he made the return trip in safety and handed me a neat package. My eyes met those of Miss Delplain, and I knew that my ocean trip was going to be good for me.

I opened the package while my friends crowded around me, and there were the nine bills. I could not blame Dane for the loss of the tenth; but I've often wondered since whether it washed ashore at any of the beaches. What a beautiful little romance a man could make out of it!

But my own romance was good enough for me for the present. I asked Mrs. Delplain's consent that evening, and in the course of conversation it turned out that she had been a schoolmate of my mother, so, of

course, she had not the slightest objection to my marrying Dorothy.

While I was talking to her a brilliant thought came into my head, induced by what struck me as a curious coincidence. We had been at sea just a week, and it was the day before Easter.

"Would it not be a happy augury for the success of my book, Mrs. Delplain?"—somehow I could talk to the mother without getting all tied up—"would it not be a happy augury for the success of my 'Eastern Easter' if we were married on Easter Day?"

Mrs. Delplain, who is a Baptist and not up in the Episcopal time-table, said she thought it would; and then the bugle sounded for dinner, and as she had her sea appetite on, she went down without saying anything further.

As for me, having obtained her consent, I went at once to the Rev. Charles W. Opdyke, of Philadelphia, who, as luck would

have it, was one of the passengers; and I told him of the good fortune that was to be mine, and asked him if he would unite us in the bonds on Easter Day. He said that, with the captain's consent, nothing would give him greater pleasure. He also said that it was a little unusual to be married on Sunday, but that he did not see any objection to it. "'The better the day, the better the deed,' when a deed is so good as this," said he. Then I went to nail the captain.

"Why, most surely," said he. "I will have the cook make a Wilhelmina cake in honor of the occasion. Such an uncle!"

It seemed hard for him to get over my uncle.

Then it suddenly occurred to me that I had not told Dorothy about the date. It would be awkward if she learnt it from another passenger.

She was sitting with her mother in the ladies' saloon. "Dorothy," said I, "let me

congratulate you. You are to be married next Sunday."

Several passengers looked up in astonishment, and Dorothy blushed 'a delightful shade of red. But, before she could speak, her mother said: "Next Sunday? Why, you told me that you wanted to marry her on *Easter* Sunday."

Dear Baptist woman, she had supposed dimly that Easter came some time in the fall. But she was true-blue. I told her that I did not believe in long engagements, and that if we waited for Easter to fall in the autumn, we'd both pass away unwedded, and then she said: "It's all the same. If you are to be my son-in-law, the sooner the better."

Do you know that then for the first time I realized that she would be my mother-in-law, and it gave me a bit of a shiver, but only because the professional jokers have said so much on the subject. I really had no cause for worry, and I leant over, and was just

going to kiss her when I remembered the other passengers, and I didn't do it.

I tried to get Dane to be my best man, but he is light-headed, and said that he wouldn't come over the hawser for a whole book full of bank bills; but he wished me every sort of joy. I had sent him a note explaining what was going to happen.

But, as it turned out, he was best man—at a distance—after all. Easter morning dawned, beautiful and springlike. We were married in the stern of the vessel—really on the steerage deck, under an awning, for no reason in the world but that Dane could be near us and act as best man from the bow of the Humbug liner.

I hadn't seen Dorothy look so beautiful since we left Hoboken—never, in fact. She was dressed in some kind of gray cloth frock, and I had borrowed a coat, also a frock, from a man not much bigger than I, and I wore a collar that Master Eddy Hoch, of Cincinnati, lent me. It was decidedly the

best fit of any I had tried on since my own became undesirable.

I gave Dorothy one of the bills as a wedding present, and I think that that added to her happiness. I feel that I can say this without detracting from my own merits. She felt more comfortable coming to me not entirely dowerless.

It was the event of the voyage as far as the rest of the passengers were concerned—and, in fact, as far as we ourselves were concerned.

When we debarked at Boulogne, Dane and Mrs. Delplain accompanied us on a short wedding trip to Paris.

Uncle Bob had evidently surmised that I had been carried off, for when Dane went to his banker's there was a cable for me that caused Mrs. McPherson and her husband unalloyed joy. It ran as follows:

"Book going like hot cakes. Hope you found the book-marks."

The Man in the Red Sweater

THE interesting talker is that man who, having something to say, says it without stopping to verify his statements, and to whom the day of the week on which a thing happened, the exact name of the man who did it, and the geography of the land in which it was done, are as nothing.

Such a man was among the passengers on the ocean voyage of which I have made mention, and there were few minutes during the day that he did not have an interested group of auditors around him. That all his statements were mathematically correct, I will not swear, but on an ocean voyage who cares?

The guileless blue eyes of this ready talker added a piquancy to his remarks when they

seemed to savor of exaggeration. Before I heard him talk, I took him to be a minister of the gospel merely on account of those eyes; but after he spoke I no longer thought so, as his language was sometimes racy, and he did not hesitate to use the word that was at tongue, merely because it could not trace a pedigree through five or six dictionaries.

There was not a soul on board who knew what his name was. He said he'd tell if anyone guessed, but no one did so, and there was no name on the passenger list that corresponded with the number of his stateroom. He went by the name of "Red Sweater" behind his back, and "You" to his face. He wore a red sweater, I was going to say, day and night—certainly all of every day—and white canvas shoes.

Speech in New York is permeated by that awful, tough accent that even before the days of "Chimmie Fadden" had begun to make permanent impressions on the imita-

tive minds of our youth, and I have heard literary men, whose subject-matter was of the best, use the whining tone with the aspirate at the end of most of their words. But slangy as "Red Sweater" was, his enunciation was as cultivated and as clean-cut as that of Edwin Booth himself, that shining exemplar of perfect speech.

The first day out, when I went down to dinner, "Red Sweater" was talking to a man from Boston, and as I glanced at him I wondered that a minister would appear in so unconventional a garb. But when, in a beautifully modulated voice, he said to the Massachusetts man, "No, sir, there are no long-distance authors to-day," I decided he was not of the cloth.

The Bostonian, a somewhat vinegary man, with a thin bluish nose and eyes unpleasantly contiguous, looked shocked at the flippant words, but "Red Sweater" went on unabashed:

"We have a number of pen trailers who

can do their little hundred-yard dashes, but when it comes to six-day contests we are not in it with the old-fashioned push like Charley Dick and Willie Thack."

The Bostonian gasped for breath, but the man with the honest blue eyes helped himself to some celery and patted his left hand with it to emphasize his remarks, and went on talking.

"Mind you, I'm not standing up at all for the mountains of chapters that the old-timers found in the depths of their ink wells. I remember once saying to Louis Stevenson, on one of these very boats—it was when he was coming over the second time, and he had been outlining the plot of 'The Master of Ballantrae' to me. I said, 'Louis, don't make the mistake of building a three-volume novel out of a one-volume heap of material.' And he said he wouldn't. But then he was economical in the matter of words. One of his was worth three of the ordinary variety. He didn't fasten his hooks

on the first word that happened to come tumbling out of his mind. He hunted around there until he struck one that was just the right size and shape, and then he slapped it into place, and used a little of the mortar of felicity to make it stick, and there he was. If Scott could have taken lessons from Stevenson on the destruction of useless words, the Waverley novels would pack into a smaller box, and Scott would push Louis very hard with the young people of to-day. Walter used to go to a pile of words, and he'd reach up to get a handful and a whole hodful would tumble on him. It didn't make any difference to him; he'd use them all and more until you couldn't see the plot for the verbiage."

At this point the man from Boston murmured something inarticulately and left the table, but the man in the unconventional dress turned his attention to me and went on blithely, and I was only too glad to hear him talk.

"What else did you say to Stevenson?" I asked with sincere interest.

"Why," said my friend simply, "I said, 'Louis, if Charley was alive to-day, he'd bite out one quarter of "David Copperfield." Same way with Charley Reade and the "Cloister and the Hearth." They'd have to gain the attention of a public that thinks it's getting a new masterpiece hot from the bat every thirteen minutes, and they'd have to strip to their breech clouts to do it. Why, even Thackeray didn't need all the words he used in "Vanity Fair."'"

"Did you ever meet Kipling?" I asked somewhat irrelevantly. I wondered whether he would think that the Indian author was an economist in words, but he went off on a new topic as soon as I asked the question.

"Did I ever meet Kipling? Well, I only spent one summer on Kipling's place. I was shoving the plane that year, just so as to keep me out doors—I learned the trick at the Boston 'Tech.,' and when Rudyard found

out that I was fond of literature, he used to come out to the barn where I was shingling, and doing other odd jobs, and he'd perch himself on the scaffolding and talk to me. I told him one day that he wasn't a simon-pure poet. I said, 'Mr. Kipling, the truth is, that when Thackeray died, his ballad mantle was hung up for some years, and then you came along and it descended on you, and I want to tell you that you have made a better garment of that mantle. You can't do the sentimental act as well as he could, but if *you* had written "The White Squall" it wouldn't have been full of bad rhymes and worse rhythm, and even you would have avoided certain coarse lines that the public of to-day won't stand for, and you'd have eased up a little on the Jews, which he didn't seem to be able to do. But after all it isn't first-chop rhymes and dance-rhythms that make a poet, or Gilbert would be one and you'd be another. You are always more than a rhymester because you're dead care-

ful, which Thackeray wasn't, but the mantle of poesy is too big for your frame, and I don't think you'll grow into it in this life. But anyhow, you're warm enough without it. You're one of the warmest babies in the incubator, Kipling,' said I."

"And what did Kipling say?"

"Oh, he laughed and said he never saw such a country for educated mechanics. But he knew I was right. He'd never think of putting his steppers into Tennyson's shoes, even to walk around a quatrain. He knows well enough when he's up to the limit."

I do not know, and I do not care, whether my friend was romancing or not. He had something to say and he said it right along. He would listen if anyone else spoke, and his eye was not of the wandering kind, but he was so much happier when he was doing the talking, that we all let him; all but the Bostonian. He avoided him on account of his slang I suppose, although slang dropped into the current of his speech as naturally as

apple blossoms fall into a running brook, and decorated it just as much. He had met everyone, or said he had, and the stories he told of the Czar, the Mikado, Whistler, Paul Krüger, and other celebrities were always peculiarly fresh, in as much as they were original with him. They had no smell of printer's ink on them. Whether they were true or not, they might well have been. One day someone was talking about the English stage, and I happened to say: "I wish I could meet Henry Irving."

"Didn't you ever meet him?" said "Red Sweater," his fathomless blue eyes looking at me in pity. "Now there's an illustration of what I was saying the other day about great men always being versatile men. Irving is only a great actor because he happened to take up acting. He'd have been a great preacher or a great drummer if he'd happened to go in for those particular arts."

His eyes took on a reminiscential haze.

"Why, I remember once, the year of the

great blizzard, the train on which we were parting the air from Springfield to Albany, broke down at an out-of-the-way village in Massachusetts, near the line, and he got out to walk a little, after the fashion of an Englishman. It would be two hours before we could go on. I'd struck up an acquaintance with him in the smoker, and I accompanied him on his stroll. We passed a little gospel shack after we'd been moving some five minutes and an anxious-looking man in the door called out as we came up, 'Are you Mr. Smorltork, the lecturer?' I saw in a minute what had happened, and I said in an undertone to Irving, 'Tell him yes, and go in and give 'em a lecture.' Irving is one of the most playful fellows in the world, and he fell in with the idea at once. I suppose he saw a chance for once in his life to do a little stunt without having all the world know that it was he, Sir Henry Irving, who was doing it. You see, when one has a reputation like his to jolly along it gets to be a bit of a

strain on one's mind after a while to know just how to do it. It sort of keeps you guessing all the time. There are moments when you'd like to be just your fool-self, but the world won't let you. Here at last was Henry's heaven-sent opportunity, and he rose to the mark like a man. We went in together and found a typical country audience, wide-eyed and solemn, waiting for Leonidas Smorltork, or some such name as that, to come and tell them what he knew about Charlotte Corday.

"Well, I walked up with plenty of assurance, and said, 'I have great pleasure in introducing to you the famous lecturer Leonidas Smorltork, who will fascinate you with his remarks on the career of the lamented Charlotte Corday.' And that is just what Irving did. He began with her youth, and he made up some pathetic anecdotes about her happy childhood at Auteuil, and then he told about her feeling called upon to lead the French armies to victory, and how

Lamartine and Robespierre tried to dissuade her, but she was adamant, and how at last she found herself storming the Bastile, and how freedom shrieked when Charlotte Corday fell and Marat never smiled again. I tell you I was glad I had come and the little audience was spellbound.

"The treasurer wanted to hand 'Mr. Smorltork' a check, but Irving said, with a Louis XI. air, 'Mail it to me address,' and then we went back to the train. He didn't mix history up any more than some expert historiographers do, and he didn't claim to be an expert. He brought sunshine into a little village, and if his facts didn't tally with French history, no one there was ever the wiser. Truth is mighty and will prevail, but while it's getting ready to prevail, let us have a little of the other thing to brighten us up. I've always thought that if old man Munchausen had gone to the trouble of verifying all his statements, his stories would have lost spontaneity, and he wouldn't have had

time to write more than the first one. Bill Nye once said to me, 'Truth, sir, is a very valuable thing, and the less truth there is, the more valuable it becomes. If everybody spoke the truth all the time it would be like Confederate money—of no use except to antiquarians.'" Here he paused and corrected himself for the first and only time. "I was mistaken," said he, "it wasn't Bill Nye, but Mark Twain, who told me that."

Here someone said: "Does it make any difference who says a thing if it's good?"

"Red Sweater" looked compassionately at his questioner and said, "You can wager your saccharine existence it does. If James McNeill Whistler says a good thing once, it is accepted at its full value, but little Tommy Incog might say it until he was blue in the face and it wouldn't be worth shucks unless someone happened to hear it who was not prejudiced by a name or lack of a name. If Felicia Hemans had written 'The Heathen

Chinee,' lots of good souls would have found it full of religious sentiment, and if Bret Harte had written 'Onward, Christian Soldiers' there would have been crowds of people hunting for the joke, and finding it, too. You can pile your fortune on the fact that names color statements." And then the dinner bugle blew and the conversation, or monologue, ended.

We touched at France at dusk of a humid summer's day, and there many went to Boulogne on the tender. There was also one who came to the steamer from the tender. He was an American, and he seemed to be looking for a friend. In the course of his search his eye fell on "Red Sweater," who was entertaining some of us with a story of how General Boulanger once gave him a lift on the highway running to Chartres. The newcomer stopped over to the raconteur, whispered one or two words in his ear, and stepped back a pace. "Red Sweater's" color heightened, and his blue eyes glistened just

a trifle, but he finished his story, and then said:

"Well, boys, my plans have been suddenly changed, and instead of going to Rotterdam I'm going ashore here with my friend. Good-by and good luck."

Then he and the stranger hurried off, and in a short time "Red Sweater's" baggage, which consisted of a small steamer trunk and a hand bag, was put on the tender, and he and his friend went away in the mist that lay over the Channel.

It was kept pretty quiet, but the Captain told me that "Red Sweater" was wanted for some little irregularity committed in New York, and that a prison yawned for him, undoubtedly. He also told me his name, and it was not "Red Sweater."

Well, my blue-eyed friend, my good wishes go with you wherever you are. If your love of truth has taught you to be sparing of it, and you are now suffering the consequences, I hope that they have not

doomed you to solitary confinement, for that would be too hard on the other prisoners. Here's hoping that they make you editor of the prison paper, and put me on the exchange list.

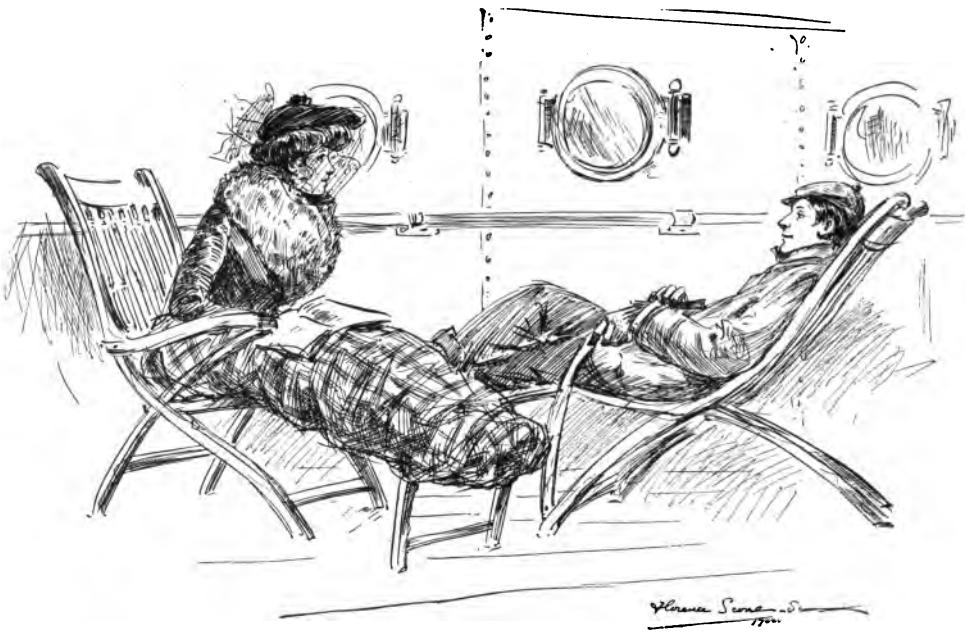
Little Miss Flutterly's Dissertation on War

SHE was just as pretty as she knew how to be, and she didn't have to help nature much. Day after day I had seen her talking to the young men on the steamer, but I did not come under the spell of her tongue until the evening before we landed at New York.

She was about seventeen, with a voice wonderfully sweet, and almost Southern in its softness. I had long desired to meet her, because I like to hear a pretty woman talk. The army chaplain introduced me to her. They had evidently been talking about war, for as I sat down and the chaplain went below for a smoke, she said:

"When do *you* suppose the Boer war will end?"

Before I could reply she went on, swiftly



"WHEN DO YOU SUPPOSE THE BOER WAR WILL END?"—P. 152.

and softly and irresistibly: "Don't you think wars are cruel? I'd hate to see a French war, because the French must be awfully cruel, judging by their cabmen. My! their horses did look so tired out. So different from the horses in Amsterdam and The Hague. Didn't you love Holland? So awfully neat. The vegetables were piled up so prettily on the carts. That reminds me that I saw in the paper the other day that sweet potatoes are unknown in England. Just fancy! Well, they're only just beginning to use ice, they're so conservative. You know, they think it's bad for the stomach. I heard pa say that he thought gin was much worse. It must be awful stuff, almost as bad as absinthe. I never tasted absinthe, but in Paris my brother Tom wanted to see what it was like, and he had to be brought home, although there isn't any word for home in French. I wonder how they can sing 'Home, Sweet Home.' But did you know that we haven't any word for

country? You know, the French say *patrie,* but we can only say 'country,' and of course that might mean the place where you go on your vacation.

"Oh, dear me hum, my vacation's almost over, and I have had the loveliest time. I'll have to begin school the week after we land. I tell mother I've learned more about foreign countries than all the arithmetics and grammars in the world could teach me. What country did you like best? I thought that Belgium was next to Holland. I don't mean geographically, of course I know that; but it was neater there than in Paris. But Holland was the neatest. I'll never forget the vegetables piled up on the carts. But in Holland I saw a mother smoking—a lady, too. Don't you think it is shocking for a mother to smoke? Like as not when her sons grow up they'll take to smoking, too. I think it's kind of fun, don't you know, but awfully improper. But aren't the French improper? I wanted to go to some

of those queer places, but ma said it would never do: that we might meet somebody there that we knew. You know, we were always meeting somebody that we knew. Why, it seemed as if you couldn't go to any large city without seeing Americans. Awfully nice to meet Americans, I think. There aren't any people as bright as Americans. Don't you think so? And what is your candid opinion of German girls? Don't you think our girls are prettier? And the Dutch. They aren't pretty, but they are so neat. It seems a pity that the Dutch and the English should be fighting, for the Dutch *are* so neat, and the English are our cousins, and blood is thicker than water. But wasn't the water awful in Holland? I had to drink mineral water all the time. I think they must use all their best water to keep the streets clean. Paris seemed dirty after Holland, and then the French horses did look so thin and abused. So did the Belgians'. I think they must have French blood. They

are so cruel, those French. But the women certainly are stylish. Only I can't say as much for the men. Their bushy, long hair, and their baggy trousers, and their ridiculous hats, and the girls with bloomers on wheels! Oh, I think they were anything but stylish. The English never wear bloomers. I will say that for them, although I'm no Anglomaniac. But I *did* like London. Awfully dirty, but awfully fascinating. If England were as clean as Holland I think I'd like it better than Holland, because you can understand the language; but they don't make any attempt with their vegetables, and they don't use sweet potatoes; but they certainly are great fighters, only I think it is a pity that the poor little Dut—oh, here comes Miss Standish. I promised to play shovel-board with her, so I must go. I've been awfully pleased to talk about the war with you—and the trip. Awfully jolly to travel, don't you think? It makes one keep one's eyes open. Hello, you dear thing! I

know you'll beat me all to pieces. [*To me*] I really think that conversation is more intellectual than games. You must tell me some more about that horrid war to-morrow."

The Expatriation of Jonathan Taintor

WHILE I was in London I met a New York friend who was stopping in that America-in-London, Bloomsbury, and during our conversation he told me that he had for a fellow-boarder no less a person than Jonathan Taintor.

I felt that I ought to know Jonathan Taintor, and I have since found out that most people have heard something concerning him; but although the name had a good old Connecticut sound, I could not fit Mr. Taintor into any nook, so I frankly said to my friend: "Jonathan Taintor lies in the future for me."

"Why, I'll have to introduce you. I believe he's been written up before, but he's such a character that it will do you good to

JONATHAN TAINTOR.—P. 159.

meet him. Can't you come to dinner to-night?"

Now, I had been reckoning on going that evening to the opera at Covent Garden; but characters do not pop around every corner, and, besides, I had not seen my New York friend for a long time, so I accepted his cordial invitation.

That evening at seven I went to the American boarding-house in Bedford Place, just off High Holborn, and was soon sitting at dinner with my friend.

Directly opposite me sat a man who might have left the valley of the Connecticut five minutes before. There are Taintors all about the Haddams that look just like him. He was short, thick-set, with dreamy blue eyes, a ruddy face that betokened a correct life, a curved nose, broad, straight, shaven upper lip, and a straggling silver chin-beard.

There was more or less twang in the tones of everyone at the table, but his voice had a special nasal quality that seemed to bespeak

a lifetime of bucolic Yankee existence. It was really so pronounced as to sound stagy.

The talk at dinner was desultory, and Mr. Taintor said little. I noticed that he had a dish of corned beef and cabbage, although the *pièce de résistance* for the rest of us was beef with a Yorkshire pudding. He left the table before coffee was served, but not before my friend had asked him to join us later on the balcony for a smoke and chat.

When we went up we found him already on the balcony, smoking a corn-cob pipe of American manufacture. My friend introduced us, and he shook my hand with one downward jerk. How often have I felt that pressure in the rural districts of Connecticut!

When Mr. Taintor learned that I had been in London only a week and had just come from Middletown, his face lighted up with interest, and he said:

"You may have passed my wife in the

street. She often comes to town market days."

"Oh, then she's not with you," was my somewhat idiotic reply.

"No, she aint; an' unless the good Lord heaves enough sand into the Atlantic to make the walkin' good, she won't never be with me."

"You must be anxious to get back? Been over here some weeks?" said I.

"A matter of thirty year," he replied, and sighed prodigiously.

"Why, you must be quite an Englishman by this time."

He looked troubled. "Dew I look English?" said he.

"No, no," I replied comfortingly; "you might pass for Uncle Sam."

"Well, I hope I'll never pass fer anythin' wuss," said he. "It's jest thirty year in November sence I left America, an' I've be'n in this dreary taown ever sence; but I aint never read an English noospaper nor ridden

in an English omnibus or horse-car or steam-car, neither, an' I try to eat as much as possible what I would ef I was at home with Cynthy. An' I'm a Republican clean through."

"Well, what's keeping you here?" said I.

Mr. Taintor pressed down the tobacco in his pipe to make it burn better, and said: "I can't stan' the trip. Y' see, when we was married we thought we'd cross the ocean on aour weddin' trip. Father hed lef' me comfor'ble, an' Cynthy hed be'n dead-set on crossin' all through aour courtship. Fact is, her sister Sairy said 'at 'at was all she was marryin' fer; but of course Sairy was a great joker, an' I knowed better. Well, we went daown to Noo York the day before the steamer sailed, an' we put up at a hotel there on Broadway, an' durin' the evenin' some women got talkin' to Cynthy, an' told her haow awful sick she was like to be ef she hedn't never be'n on the ocean before. Well, it frightened her so that she backed

"SOME WOMEN GOT TALKIN' TO CYNTHY."—P. 162.

plumb aout er the harness—said she guessed we'd better go to Saratogy instead; an' the upshot was we hed aour fust an' last quar'l then. I told her I'd bought the tickets fer Europe an' we'd hev to go, an' she said she wouldn' expose herself to two or three weeks of sickness under the idee it was a picnic party, an' all I could say to her couldn't shake her. Well, it was bad enough losin' the price of one ticket, but I couldn't lose the price of two, an' so we finally come to an agreement. She was to go up to Saratogy, although the season up ther' was over, an' I was to cross the ocean alone. It was too late to git my money back, an', to tell the truth, I allers did hate to give a plan up, 'thout I hed sufficient reason; so nex' mornin' we went daown to the dock, fer we'd made up, an' she was comin' ter see me off. She took on consid'able, an' I was cut up myse'f, partic'larly when I thought of the ticket thet was bein' thrown away. But she caught a glimpse of the waves behind a

ferryboat, an' she turned white as a sheet an' shook her head; so I kissed her good-by, an' the steamer sailed away with me on it, an' her a-wavin' her arms an' cryin' on the dock."

"Poor fellow!" said I sympathetically.

"Well, the amount of seasickness she saved herself by stayin' to hum couldn't be reckoned 'thout I was a scholar, which I aint. I took to my berth before we was aout of sight of land, an' ef the brimstun of the future is any wuss 'an what I suffered, I don't want to die. But I wished I could die all the way over. I come right here to London, because there was a man I knew comin' here, too, an' I wrote to Cynthy to come right over as soon as she could, an' we'd live aour lives aout here; fer bad as it was here, nothin' on top of creation could tempt me to go back, not even her pretty face."

He stopped a minute and half closed his

eyes, and I fancy he was calling her pretty face back through the thirty years.

"Well, well, that was hard lines," said I.

"Yes, but it was wuss when I got her reply. She told me she hedn't hed a happy minute sence I left, although she hed gone up to Saratogy, but the water tasted like something was into it, an' she'd come away after one day, an' was now on the farm at Goodspeed's Landing. An' she said thet ef *I'd* be'n so sick *she'd* probably die, an' she couldn't bear to think of bein' heaved into the Atlantic, an' must stop where she was. Ah me! Sence then we've be'n as lovin' as we could be, writin' reg'lar an' rememberin' each other's birthdays an' aour weddin' anniversaries; but we haint sot eyes on each other, an' won't until we're both safe on that other shore they tell us abaout. An' I hope thet trip 'll be a smooth one."

"And what does Mrs. Taintor do all alone?"

He knocked the ashes out of his pipe and put it into his pocket before he replied:

"She runs the old farm as I never could have run it. She's a born farmer, that wife of mine is. She has a hired man to help, but she does a good share of the work herself, an' every year she sen's me half the airnings; an' I live on here, hatin' it all an' hopin' for the time to come when the ocean 'll either dry up or freeze over, or that Cynthy will overcome her dislike to the trip. Married life aint e'zac'ly pleasant so fur apart, but I c'n truthfully say we've never quar'led sence I come here, an' I aint seen a woman sence I landed thet could hold a candle to Cynthy. Cynthy is a pretty gal."

Shortly afterward the old man retired to his own room, and then my friend, who had not spoken once since we came out, wickedly hinted that maybe Mr. Taintor only imagined that he loved Cynthia, and that they were happier separated; but I hate to spoil idyls in that way. To me it is very beauti-

"WE HED AOUR FUST AN' LAST QUAR'L."—P. 163.

ful, the thought of that dear old lady in Connecticut, who runs the farm and writes loving letters to her expatriated spouse and sends him a share of the profits, but who cannot overcome her antipathy to the unstable sea. And when I think of Mr. Taintor as he appeared that evening in Bloomsbury, with his honest Yankee face, and his loyalty to Yankee traditions, and his ardent love for his absent wife, I say, "Hurrah for both of them!"

The Memory of Carlotta

WHAT a beautiful thing is constancy; beautiful in a woman, more beautiful in a man. I think that I never saw a finer exemplification of the divine attribute than in Apthorp Polhemus, whom I met at the Paris Exposition on his second wedding trip.

I was visiting for the fourth or fifth time the American art exhibit in the Grand Palais des Beaux Arts, and was proud to have just heard from the lips of a passing Frenchman that with the exception of France there was no nation whose exhibit could compare with that from the United States. While I was still glowing with patriotic fervor a woman entered the first room dragging a reluctant husband after her. "My," said she in a high-keyed, strident voice, "there aint many pictures in this room, are there?" A

rapid twist of the head and room number one was finished, so far as she was concerned, and her energetic feet carried her into the next room, where she made a similar remark and hurried her poor, tired husband along. But happening to see Brown's eternal group of street boys with "shining morning faces" she stopped for nearly thirty seconds! Sargent had not appealed to her, Inness had labored in vain, Whistler had plied a useless brush; but she recognized something in the Brown picture, and gloated just as long as she had time to do it. "That's elegant," she said to her husband. "That took the $5000 prize at Chicago. Come along, there's three rooms more;" and her husband, ready to drop, and with no eye for pictures, even $5000 ones, dragged after her into another room.

A voice at my side said: "There are many people who, in the education of their color sense, never get beyond Brown."

I chortled appreciatively, and turned to

see who had spoken. It was Apthorp Polhemus, as I afterward learned—Apthorp Polhemus, who, on his second wedding trip, displayed such marked constancy to his first wife.

Finding that in art matters our tastes were similar, we struck up a ready acquaintance and did the rest of the rooms together.

"Traveling alone?" said I.

"Yes—er—no, no. Mrs. Polhemus is along, but she got overtired yesterday, and stayed at the hotel this morning. It seems strange to say Mrs. Polhemus," he went on, his naturally mournful face assuming a more mournful cast. "She *is* Mrs. Polhemus, but not *the* Mrs. Polhemus."

I looked a little puzzled, and he explained as we walked through the galleries, stopping here and there as we were attracted by the works of art.

"Ten years ago (Isn't that a characteristic Inness?) I married my first wife, Carlotta, and for five fleeting years we were

happy together. We came over here for a wedding trip. (Those lips are just the color of smoked beef.) We came over here for a wedding trip, and I knew then what happiness was. (Childe Hassam knows his Fifth Avenue, doesn't he?) Carlotta was fond of music, fond of paintings, fond of sight-seeing, and we both felt that Europe had been constructed for our amusement. I was not absent from her for a moment, and such a thing as a harsh word was unknown to either of us. (I say, isn't that a poetic treatment of the Brooklyn Bridge? One of Ranger's, isn't it? He understands the poetry of the commonplace. I wish Carlotta could have seen that.)"

"Excuse me, but did you say that you are married again?" I asked.

"Yes—oh, yes," said Mr. Polhemus, making a cone of his hand through which to view the picture that had taken his fancy. "I found that I needed to talk to someone of the charms of dear Carlotta, and Helen

was very sympathetic, and so I married her. (Church is at it again. It's always Beauty and the Beast with him.) Then I had the happy thought of revisiting the scenes made dear to me by Carlotta. I live them over again (Now, that's my idea of how a portrait should *not* be painted. The face is only an accessory to the fabrics), and although the present Mrs. Polhemus doesn't pretend to be the equal of Carlotta, either in mind or attractiveness, yet she is a very comfortable traveling companion, and it adds to my mournful pleasure to tell her the delights of that memorable trip ten years ago. ('The Senator's Birthplace.' Isn't that bleak? It was on just such a bleak New England scene that I met Carlotta.)"

We passed to the next picture, and he suddenly stopped talking, and became lost in thought before it. It was the portrait of a noble-looking woman. His eyes moistened and I turned away, not wishing to spy on his emotion.

"To the life—Carlotta to the life."

I took especial notice of the picture. It was that of a woman with dark hair and regular and singularly mobile features, old-fashioned and winsome. I thought that if Carlotta looked like that, it was no wonder that Mr. Polhemus had loved her. But I afterward visited many a gallery with the married widower, if so I may call him, and he never failed to spot at least one portrait or ideal head that was the painted presentment of Carlotta, and the various pictures did not look any more alike than the numerous portraits of Napoleon. One of them was Rubens' first wife, and another was his second wife, both fleshly women, miles removed from the spiritual face that he had first pointed out to me. Yes, after a while, I could tell intuitively when he was going to stop and gaze rapturously at a picture, and then say, in low tones: "To the life, my Carlotta." I dare say that he found a reminiscence in all of them; it was certainly not

a pose of his. There never lived a more simple man that Apthorp Polhemus.

That morning we did the American galleries pretty thoroughly, and I could not tell which pleased me the more, his just and often humorous comments on the pictures, or his revelation of constancy to a departed companion, as evinced in his yearning and sympathetic encomiums on Carlotta.

At last we parted at the hideous Porte Triumphale, after making an appointment to meet that evening at Vieux Paris to hear a Colonne concert.

"Carlotta raved over Colonne, and I want the present Mrs. Polhemus to hear the man whose orchestra gave us such happiness."

Those were his words as he hailed a *voiture* and was driven to his hotel.

I had been leaning for some minutes over the ramparts of the reproduction of Old Paris, looking at the feast of lights that besprinkled the waters of the Seine, when I saw Mr. Polhemus approaching. His sad,

pale face looked even more melancholy in the evening light, and was in marked contrast to the pretty, fresh, pink-and-white features of the lady who had elected to be the recipient of the praises of "Number One." Her voice was as sweet as that of a Southern woman, and I regretted for the moment that there had been a Carlotta. But in the end my admiration for the constancy of the bereft traveler became dominant.

He presented me, and we went into the hall where the concert was to be given. Picturesque damsels in little caps and short dresses came to us and performed useless offices for which they demanded "benefices." I handed one a two-franc piece for a programme, and she retained it, murmuring "Benefice" in so soft a voice that it was not until the music had begun that I realized that I had been cheated. I wondered whether Mr. Polhemus would refer to Carlotta in the presence of Mrs. Polhemus. I was not long kept in doubt. The first num-

ber on the programme was the Suite Algerienne of Saint-Saëns.

"M-m-m-m-m," said Mr. Polhemus, as if he had just tasted a delicious grape. "How delightful! One of Carlotta's favorites. My dear Helen, I wish that you had Carlotta's musical sense. You won't like this as she did."

Mrs. Polhemus blushed one of the loveliest colors I ever saw on a satin skin. "No, but I hope I'll like it as *I* do. I'm very fond of Saint-Saëns."

"Yes, my dear," said Mr. Polhemus, "but she was fond of him with a musician's fondness. Your ears like him, but it was her immortal soul that drank him in."

I was satisfied. Here was constancy to beat the band, as the vulgarians say. How easy it would have been for a man of no convictions to assert that the present Mrs. Polhemus loved music just as much as Carlotta had been wont to. But Mr. Polhemus would not lay perjury to his soul.

When the music again began, he was silent, and again his eyes moistened, and at the end of the first movement he applauded with tremendous enthusiasm and said:

"I wish that you had known Carlotta, my dear."

"I wish I had," said Helen, and there was a world of meaning in her simple words. I really felt sorry for Mrs. Polhemus. Not because Mr. Polhemus was constant to the memory of his first love, but because she had missed the position herself. In my humble opinion, she was worthy to have been his first choice. And yet it must have been a sort of education to her to learn what a cultured woman like Carlotta had thought of this temple and that statue; of how she had reveled in a tone picture at the Opéra, or been ravished by a feast of color in the Louvre. Mr. Polhemus knew just what to pick out for her delectation; anything that had received the hallmark of Carlotta's discriminating praise was meet to show to her

successor; and, as Helen herself was a woman of innate refinement, I believe that she fully appreciated her benefits, although she may not altogether have shared his love for Carlotta.

I journeyed with them for nearly a week, as we were a congenial trio, and I never saw Mrs. Polhemus in any mood but an amiable one. This was probably because Mr. Polhemus himself was singularly even-tempered. I could well believe that he and Carlotta had lived in amity.

Once, at the hotel in Brussels, Mrs. Polhemus said that she did not care for a certain carrot soup, and her husband was overcome with dejection.

"Why, Helen, I am sure I must have told you that Carlotta used to make this kind of soup herself, and it was one of her favorites to the last. I remember she said she was fond of carrots for three reasons: they were so opulent in color, their flavor was just the thing that soup needed, and their long, deli-

cately tapering form reminded her of her mother, whom I never saw. You should like this soup for Carlotta's sake."

Mrs. Polhemus smiled a strange smile, but she did not attempt to finish the soup. However, her widowed husband did not notice it. "To-morrow," said he, "we must go to the park. Carlotta always thought the vistas more beautiful than any in Paris."

And so he was all the time; thoughtful of the comfort of Helen and ingeniously devising means by which she could be made to drink at the fountains which Carlotta's fingers had blessed.

At Antwerp I was to leave them, and I regretted it for more than one reason; but I was not going to do Antwerp until after I had been to Holland. Just as we were entering the outskirts of the city, Mr. Polhemus said reminiscently:

"I have put up at two hotels here in Antwerp. One is very good, and the other

is atrocious. In my student days I stopped at the good one, but when I came with Carlotta I relied on the advice of a traveler, and we put up at the bad one—that is, we first put up at it and then had to put up with it. It was the—er—well, no matter now; I have it in my notebook. We passed a horrible night there. The dinner was awful, the service worse, the beds something beyond belief, and the ringing every few minutes of the Cathedral chimes made sleep impossible, if nothing else had done so. But Carlotta was so patient under it all. We spent the night sitting on chairs and looking out on an air-shaft—looking for air. Every few minutes the bells seemed to be trying to recollect an operatic aria that they had only half heard; and then at the quarters, I think it was, the big bell Carolus would 'swallow up the universe in sound'—that was Carlotta's poetic phrase—and while its sweet, resonant tones were sounding, we felt reconciled to our plight. But it was hot and

humid, and the hotel was old and unsavory. Altogether it was one of the most painful recollections of my married life."

"Then, of course, you'll go to the hotel you stayed at when you were a student," said Helen in a matter-of-fact tone.

Mr. Polhemus looked at her in mild surprise. "Why, no, my dear. I would not miss refreshing my memory of that night for worlds. When I think of the saintlike equanimity of dear Carlotta, I love her more than ever. I will, if possible, get the same room, and you shall see for yourself what Carlotta——"

It has been remarked by some judge of human nature that women are enigmas. Oh, sapient one! They are. It was not much that Mr. Polhemus had asked. It would be a mere recollection next day. As the Psalmist has said, joy would come in the morning, but Helen forgot the Psalmist, forgot what she owed Mr. Polhemus and the memory of Carlotta, and gave him an

angry look that would have pierced a pachyderm.

I was only too glad to bid them good-by when, a minute later, we stopped at Antwerp and they left the railway carriage. I heard her tell the porter the name of the best hotel in Antwerp, so, if Mr. Polhemus did spend the night on a sanctified chair listening to the bells, he did so alone, with nothing but the memory of Carlotta for a companion.

My way after that led through Holland, and I did not expect to see any more of the Polhemuses, as they were going to Düsseldorf from Antwerp. But travelers do not always hold fast to their itineraries, and a week later, in The Hague, as I stood in front of Paul Potter's Bull, wondering whether my judgment was poor or Mr. Potter had been too highly praised, I heard a familiar voice behind me—that of a woman. She said: "Why in the world is the man pushed off to one side? He looks as if he'd fall out

of the frame. I think he must have been put in as an afterthought, after the bull was finished."

I could feel her companion wince. "Don't, my dear. You are positively sacrilegious. That is the most celebrated cattle picture in the world, and Carlot——"

"Mr. Polhemus, I must remind you once for all that *I* am Mrs. Polhemus now, and my opinion is that Troyon would have painted that bull and man far better."

Let those who will gloat over Mr. Polhemus' discomfiture. I could not. I escaped unseen into the crowd, while Mr. Polhemus, who had harped once too often on the merits of Carlotta, laid his harp aside until he should need it in a duet.

Truman Wickwire's Gloves

TRUMAN WICKWIRE was as rich as he was mean, and if you had known Truman you would have considered him wealthy from any point of view. He had inherited a small fortune, and did not need to work, but still kept at his trade of wheelwright. He lived in a little hill town in northeastern Connecticut, and, as luck would have it, was married. Whatever luck was in the proposition was on his side, for his wife, a meek, good-tempered little woman, led a dog's life through his dictatorial ways.

One day he could not find his gloves. He was going to a funeral, and although at any other time gloves would have been an absurdity, for a funeral they were a necessity.

Mrs. Wickwire was at work in the

kitchen; for Truman had never grown rich enough to relieve his wife of the smallest detail of housework, and she slaved for his comfort, as she had any time these twenty years.

He came to the door of their bedroom, which opened off the kitchen, and, in his rough, unpleasant bass, shouted:

"Sayrah, where's my gloves?"

Mrs. Wickwire looked up despairingly. "Why, Truman, I'm sure I don't know. Where'd you put 'em when you last had 'em? You wore 'em to Zelia Higgins' funeral, didn't ye?"

"Well, as I wear 'em to every funeral, an' she was the last t' die hereabouts, of course I did. But that don't tell me where they are. I ask you."

"Well, really, I dunno, Truman. I'll go look for 'em." She was mixing dough when she spoke, but she got up and washed her hands, and began a fruitless hunt of a half-hour without protest. Whether she

ever felt like protesting or not, she certainly never uttered a complaint.

At the end of half an hour she went to him in the barn, where he was harnessing the old sorrel. "Truman, I can't find them gloves."

He was feeling in a particularly bad humor, as the old horse had just trod on his foot, and he glared at her a moment without speaking. A faint tinkle of the butcher's bell came up the road, borne on the south wind, and it gave him a malicious idea. As he climbed into the wagon to go to the funeral without his gloves, he said:

"Sayrah, you must ha' lost those gloves, an' until you find 'em you can't buy any meat. Do you hear me?"

"What 'll *you* do?" was her answer.

"Don't you worry about me. I guess I won't be meat-hungry before you find 'em. Git ap."

He cut the horse viciously with his whip,

and started north a minute before the butcher drove up to the house.

If Mrs. Wickwire was disappointed at not having been invited by her husband to go to the funeral, she did not show it. She walked slowly out to the butcher's wagon. Although as lean as hard work could make her, she was very fond of meat, a fact of which her husband was well aware. Through force of habit she said to the butcher: "What you got?"

The butcher, Darius Hunt, was a jovial man, and he answered her with his time-honored rigmarole of "Ham, ram, lamb, beef, an' mutton."

"I can't buy any meat to-day," she said, in her mild little voice. As she spoke, she lifted the lid that covered the end of his wagon, and sniffed hungrily at the fresh meat.

"What's matter? Lost pocket-book, or is it gettin' to be Lent, or what is up?" Mr. Hunt's merry eyes beamed above his

fat red cheeks, and he looked the picture of beefy good nature.

"Mr. Wickwire won't let me buy any meat, because I can't find his funeral gloves."

Mr. Hunt dropped his cleaver and burst out laughing. "Well, is that his latest?"

He had served the Wickwires for years, and was, besides, a member of the same religious society, so he knew the oddly assorted couple with all the thoroughness that country people sometimes give to acquaintanceship.

"Well, now, Mis' Wickwire, you aint so stout that you've got to stop meat to reduce your weight, an' jes' so long as I swing my bell on this route I'll let you have what meat you want, an' I'll look to Truman for my money. You've always paid cash, but I'm not afraid of losin' my money—not while I have a tongue in my head," he added significantly.

Mean in most things, Mr. Wickwire did

not stint himself on meat, and at dinner he ate nearly half a steak before he remembered his dictum.

Then he uncorked his vials. "How in thunder did you get this meat? Didn't I tell you not to buy any? Have you found my gloves?"

The meek little woman replied: "No; but Mr. Hunt insisted on me takin' what I needed."

Wickwire stretched his lips into a snarling smile. "Well, I won't insist on payin' him what he needs in the way of money. You didn't pay him, did you?"

"Why, no; you told me not to buy any."

The smile became an unpleasant laugh. "Well, if he wants to give us meat, all right; but I didn't order the meat, and I won't pay for it, not if he supplies us for the rest of our lives."

His anticipation of getting the best of the butcher put him in such good humor that he

ate twice as much as usual, and vouchsafed some interesting details of the burial he had attended.

East Whitfield was four miles from the Center, and as Mr. Wickwire did not "farm it," being a wheelwright, they relied on the butcher for all their meat.

Darius Hunt came Wednesdays and Saturdays. The next Saturday he drove up and rang his bell. Mrs. Wickwire was out in the garden picking currants to make jelly for her husband. She hurried out to the wagon. She always hurried to everything, so that no one might be kept waiting on her account.

"Good-morning. Ham, ram, lamb, beef, or mutton? Wickwire found his gloves yit?"

"No, he hasn't; but it put him in real good humor to get that meat. He says he aint a-goin' to be responsible for it." Mrs. Wickwire said this with misgivings. It was her duty to tell the butcher that he was

likely to get no payment for his meat; but she feared that he would refuse to let her have any more, and then she knew enough of Truman to fear his tongue at a meatless dinner.

"He aint a-goin' to be responsible, aint he? Well, I aint a-goin' to git thin over that end of it. What 'll ye have to-day?"

That afternoon the butcher met Mr. Wickwire in the Center. He was going into the hardware store, which stood next to the office of the Whitfield *Witness*. He had come into town on business, and was dressed in his Sunday best.

"Afternoon, Truman," said Hunt, in his hearty, pleasant voice.

Wickwire turned and looked at him.

"Hm," he grunted.

"Got a little bill against you for meat."

Both men walked over to the curbstone to be out of the way of the Saturday crowd.

"Don't concern me; I didn't order it," said Wickwire.

"No; but your wife did, and I guess you're responsible for her debts."

"I told her not to buy any more meat——"

"Until she had found your old gloves. Well, you have a right to be as mean as it is your nater to be, but ef you don't pay spot-cash now, I'm a-goin' right in to see my good friend Editor Mason here in the *Witness* office, an' he'll print the whole story, an' it 'll be good readin' fer people hereabouts. Tryin' to starve a wife into findin' your mis'able gloves!"

Wickwire knotted his brows. He knew that, although the butcher was a good-natured man, he had plenty of determination. He did not care to have the story go any farther, and yet he hated to go back on his word to his wife. While he hesitated, Hunt took a step in the direction of the *Witness* office.

Instantly Wickwire became rattled, and felt in every pocket but the right one for his

purse. At last his hand went into his coat-tail pocket and—pulled out the missing gloves.

He looked at them in sheepish wonder for a minute.

The butcher broke the silence. "It's clear that Mrs. Wickwire don't go through your pockets."

The Deception of Martha Tucker

An Automobile Extravaganza

IT was not that Martha Tucker was particularly fond of horses so much as that she was afraid of automobiles of every sort, kind, or description. That was why she said that she would never consent to her husband's purchasing a motor carriage.

"Horses were good enough for my father, and I guess that horses will do for me as long as I live and John is able to keep them," said she to various friends on numerous occasions.

But if she was ridiculously old-fashioned in her notions, John was not, and he cast about in his mind for same way to circumvent Martha without her knowing it. The

thing would have been easy to do if it had not been for the fact that they were a very loving couple. John seldom went anywhere without taking his wife along, and as his business was of such a nature that he carried it on under his roof-tree, he was unable to speed along in happy loneliness on a locomobile or electric motor. Besides all this, John Tucker's conscience was such a peculiar affair that if he hoodwinked Martha it must be in her sight.

The Tuckers always spent their summers at Arlinburg, the roads around which were famous for driving; and almost their only outdoor recreation, aside from wandering afoot in the fields, was found in riding behind any one or two of his half-dozen horses. The fact that he was abundantly able to maintain the most expensive automobile extant made it doubly hard for John to abstain from the use of one.

"I gave up smoking to please Martha when we first married, but I do not intend

to give up the idea of running an automobile of my own, just because she has the old-fogy notions of the Hiltons in her blood. Her father never rode in a steam-car, although the road passed by his back door, and all the Hiltons are old-fogyish—which sums up their faults."

John said this to an old schoolmate who was spending a Sunday at his house.

"Wouldn't she try one of your neighbor's automobiles, and see how she likes it?"

"No, sir; her no is a no. But I mean to ride in one with her sometime, if I have to blindfold her and tell her it's a baby-carriage."

It may have been a week after this conversation that John and Martha wandered in the woods picking wild flowers, and Mrs. Tucker was inoculated with ivy-poisoning that settled in her eyes, so that for several days she was confined to her room, and when she came out she was told by her doctor to wear smoked glasses for a week or

two, her eyes still being inflamed and very painful. "Keep outdoors; go riding as much as you can, but don't take off the glasses until the inflammation has entirely subsided," said he.

John was sincerely sorry for his wife's misfortune, but when he heard that she would see through a glass darkly for the matter of a week or two, he made up his mind to act and act quickly.

They went out for a ride that he might test her vision. The horse he was driving was a gray, Roanoke by name.

"My dear," said Mr. Tucker, "don't you think that the gait of this black horse is very like that of Roanoke?"

"I'm sure I can't tell," said Martha. "With these dismal glasses on I'm not quite sure whether it's a horse or a cow in the harness. I get a hazy outline of some animal, but no color and little form. Don't ever touch poison-ivy if you value your sight."

"Well, the doctor says you'll be all right in a week or two. By the way, Martha, I'm going to run down to New York to-morrow on business. I'll be back in the evening. If your eyes were all right you might come along, but as it is, I guess you'd better not go down."

"No; driving around with James will do me more good than a stuffy train. Come home as soon as you can, dear, and——" She hesitated. "I hate the old things, but if you are so set on trying one of those automobiles, why don't you do it to-morrow when you are in New York?"

"Why, I believe I will, my dear. I wish I could overcome your prejudice against them."

"But you can't, dear, so don't try."

When Mr. Tucker reached New York, the first thing that he did was to visit an automobile repository.

"Would it be possible for you to let me have an automobile that could be operated

from behind, so that my wife and I could sit in front and simply enjoy the ride?"

"Why, certainly," said the man. "We have every style known to the most advanced makers."

"And could I have shafts attached to it so that if it broke down I could call in the services of some horse?"

"But, sir, our machines never break down. That is why we are selling one every minute in the working-day. Our agents are located in every known city of the earth, and our factories are running day and night, and in spite of it we are falling behind in our orders in a rapidly increasing ratio."

"Is that so?" said Mr. Tucker, turning to leave the store. "Then I'm afraid I'll have to go elsewhere, as I wanted one shipped to me to-morrow or next day. A birthday present for my wife, you understand."

"Oh, I suppose," said the wily salesman,

" that I *could* let you in ahead of your turn if the payment were cash."

" Of course the payment will be cash. That's the only way I ever pay."

A half-hour from that time John Tucker was being propelled through New York's busy streets in a smoothly running, almost noiseless automobile worked from behind, and its way led down to a harness store in Chambers Street. As yet there were no shafts, but he had provided for a pair.

Mr. Tucker went into the harness-store. " Good-day," said he. " I want to buy a wooden horse like the one out in front, only covered with horse-skin."

" Well, sir," said the clerk, " we don't manufacture them ourselves, but we can order one for you. Going into the harness business? "

" No, but I want to try an experiment. Would it be possible for me to have a mechanical horse built that would move its legs in a passable imitation of trotting? "

"Nowadays everything is possible," said the salesman, "but it would be very expensive."

"Well, I'll tell you just what I want it for," said Mr. Tucker, and entered into details concerning Mrs. Tucker's aversion to automobiles, her ivy-poisoning, and his scheme. The clerk seemed interested.

"If the lady's eyes are as inflamed as all that," said he, "she would not notice the lack of natural motion, and it would be easy to place a contrivance inside of the figure that would imitate the sound of trotting, and your wife's imagination would do the rest. But I think that your idea of having the horse on a platform like the one out front is not a good one. If the platform struck a rock in the road it would knock the whole thing to smithereens. Better place smallish wheels on the inner side of the ankles, fix the hind legs so they will be jointed at the thighs, and then you can run up hill and down dale with no trouble."

Mr. Tucker clapped his hands like a boy. "That's fine! My wife will get thoroughly used to an automobile without knowing she is riding in one, and then when she recovers the use of her eyes I'll give the wooden horse a well-earned rest. Call up that factory on the 'phone, and I'll order my hobby-horse at once. You think that I can get it in a day or two?"

"It's only a question of expense, sir, and you say that is nothing."

"Of course it's nothing. Nothing is anything if I can take my wife out automobiling without her knowing it."

Three days later Mr. Tucker said to his wife at luncheon:

"My dear, as this is your birthday, I have given myself the pleasure of buying you a new horse and wagon, and it will be ready for us to go out in half an hour."

"Oh, you dear, thoughtful man!" said Mrs. Tucker, beaming as well as she was able to through her smoked glasses. Then

she rose and gave him a kiss that made him feel that he was a guilty wretch to be meditating the deception of such a lovable wife. But he had gone too far to retrace his steps now, and he eased his feelings with the thought that the end would justify the means.

"You are always doing things to please me," said she.

"No such thing," he replied. "You may not like this horse as well as you like Roanoke or Charley, but it is quite a swagger turnout, and I've decided to have James go with us and sit behind on the rumble."

"Oh, but, my dear, we will not be driving alone if he is with us."

"Nonsense! We've been married twenty years, and anyhow James is a graven image. He will not know we are along." ("He will be too busy running the thing," added Mr. Tucker mentally.)

A half-hour later Mr. Tucker announced to his wife that he was ready, and she put a

few finishing touches to her toilet, bathed her eyes with witch-hazel, adjusted her smoked glasses, and went out to the porte-cochère.

She dimly discerned the horse, the wagon, the groom at the horse's head, and her husband. There was an indescribably swagger look about the equipage, and she wished that she could take off her glasses and gloat over her new possession, but the doctor's orders had been imperative. She did, however, approach the horse's head to pet him, but her husband said: "Don't, dear. He may not like women. Wait until he is used to us before you try to coddle him."

They stepped to their seats; the groom left the horse's head and handed the reins to Mr. Tucker, mounted the rumble, and off they started.

"Why, it's like sailing," said Mrs. Tucker.

"Pneumatic tires, my dear," answered her husband glibly.

"And how rhythmical the horse's hoof-beats are!"

"An evidence of blood, my darling. I know this horse's pedigree: by Carpenter out of Chestnut——"

"Oh, don't. I never cared for those long genealogies. Whether he has blood or not, he is certainly the smoothest traveler I ever saw."

They had been skillfully guided along the winding path that led to the highway by the chauffeur, who, although he was a James, was not the James who generally worked in the stable, but a James hired at the office of the company in order that he might break in the *local* James.

After they reached the road the way for a mile or more was clear and straight, and they met with no teams. The horse was wonderfully lifelike, except in his action, or rather lack of action, for his forefeet were eternally in an attitude of rest. The hind legs rose and fell with the inequalities of

the road, and his mane and tail waved in the breeze like the real horsehair that they were.

"This is the poetry of motion," said Mrs. Tucker. "I don't believe you'll ever find an automobile that can run like this."

"I'll admit that I wouldn't wish one to go better. Are you all right back there, James?"

"All right, sir."

"Why, how queer James' voice sounds! I never noticed that squeak in it before."

"It's the exhilarating effect of our fast driving. Do you think that you could stand a faster pace?"

"Why, if you're not afraid of tiring the horse. He seems to be going like the wind now."

"Oh, he won't mind. Faster, James."

"Why do you say that to James? Did you think *he* was driving, you absent-minded dear, you?"

"I did, for the moment."

James was *sure* he was driving, and at this

command from his employer he put on almost the full force of the electricity. The wagon gave a leap forward, and turning into a macadamized road at this point, they went along at the rate of twenty miles an hour.

Mrs. Tucker clutched her husband's arm. "John, his speed is uncanny. We seem to be going like an express-train."

"It's the smoothness of the road and his perfect breeding, my dear. Do you notice that this furious gait does not seem to affect his wind at all?"

"No, I hadn't noticed it; but isn't it queer how regular his hoof-beats are? and they do not seem to quicken their rate at all."

John had noticed this, too, and he had regretted not having told the manufacturer to arrange the mechanism so that the hoof-beats would become more or less rapid according to the gait; but he answered quickly:

"That, my dear, is because he reaches farther and farther. You know some breeds of horses gain speed by quickening their gait. This horse gains it by a lengthened reach. He is a remarkable animal. Actually, my dear, we are overtaking a locomobile."

"Oh, John, is he used to these horrid steam-wagons?"

"Nothing will frighten this horse, Martha. You can rest assured of that."

A minute later they passed the locomobile. If Mrs. Tucker could have seen the codfish eyes of the occupant of the vehicle when he saw a hobby-horse going by at the rate of twenty miles an hour, she would have questioned his sanity. If she could have seen the scared looks and the scared horse of the people in the approaching buggy she would have begun to wonder what possessed her new possession. But her goggles saved her from present worry, and the buggy was passed in a flash.

"Oh, I do wish I could take off my glasses for a minute so that I could enjoy this rapid motion to the full! How the trees must be spinning by!"

"Don't touch your glasses," said Mr. Tucker hurriedly. "If a speck of dust or a pebble were to get into your eye, you might become permanently blind. Positively, you are like a child with a new rocking-horse. This turnout will keep until your eyes are fully recovered, and I hope we may enjoy many a spin in this easy carriage, with or without this horse."

"Never without him, dear. After the delight of this swift motion I never would go back to lazy Roanoke or skittish Charley. I have never ridden in any carriage that pleased me like this one."

"She's a convert already without knowing it," said her husband to himself, but her next remark dispelled his illusion.

"How can anyone like a noisy automobile better than this? You can't improve on

nature. By the way, I forgot to ask you if you rode in one the other day in New York."

"To be sure. I *didn't* tell you, did I? It was really almost as nice as this, although the traffic impeded us some. Oh, James, look out!"

This interruption was involuntary on the part of Mr. Tucker, and his words were not noticed by his wife in the confusion of that which followed. They were going down a hill at a fearful rate, when the off foreleg of the wooden horse became a veritable off foreleg, for it hit a log of wood that had dropped from a teamster's cart not five minutes before, and broke off at the knee. The jar almost threw Mrs. Tucker out; she grasped the dash-board to save herself, and caught a momentary glimpse of the oddly working haunches of the imitation beast.

"Oh, John, he's running away."

Now this was not quite accurate, for he was being pushed away by a runaway auto-

"OH, JOHN, HE'S RUNNING AWAY!"—P. 210.

mobile. Mr. Tucker noticed the increased speed and turned to admonish James.

James had left.

The departure of James was coincident with the collision, and he was at that moment extricating himself from a sapling into which he had been pitched. He yelled directions to Mr. Tucker which lacked carrying power.

The vehicle had now come to a turn in the road, and not receiving any impulse to the contrary, it made for a stone wall that lay before it. Mr. Tucker knew nothing about the working of the machine, but with admirable presence of mind he seized a projecting rod, and the wagon turned to the left with prompt obedience, but so suddenly that it ran upon two wheels and nearly upset.

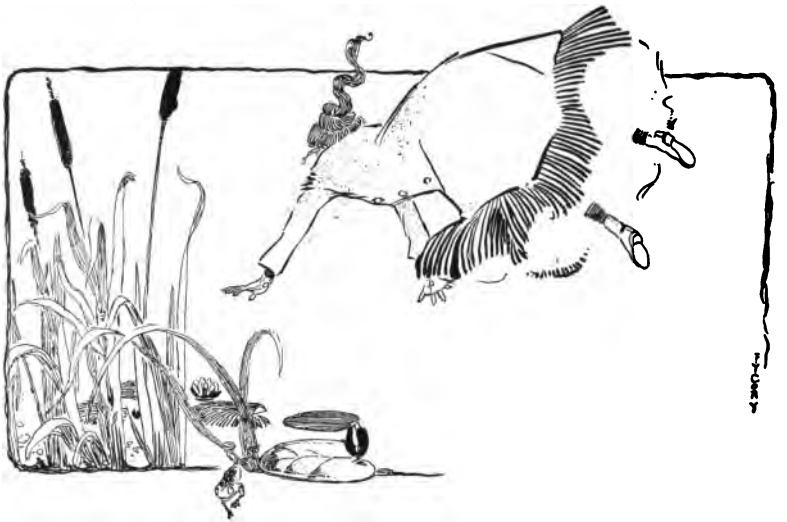
So far so good, but now what should he do? To get over to the back seat was either to give the whole thing away, or else make Mrs. Tucker question his courage.

He was too obstinate to disclose his secret until he should be forced to, so he sat still and awaited developments. Developments do not keep you waiting long when you are in a runaway automobile, and in just one minute by his watch, although he did not time it, the end came.

Too late to do any good, John Tucker jumped over the back of the seat, because he saw the wooden horse again approaching a stone wall beyond which lay a frog pond.

He pulled the lever as before, but he could not have pulled it hard enough, for the next moment there was a shock, and then Mrs. Tucker sailed like a sprite through the air and landed in the water like a nymph, while some kindling wood in a horsehair skin was all that was left of Mr. Tucker's thoroughbred.

Mr. Tucker was not hurt by the impact, for he had grasped an overhanging bough and saved himself. He dropped to earth, vaulted a stone wall, and rescued the fainting



"MRS. TUCKER SAILED LIKE A SPRITE THROUGH THE AIR."—P. 212.

figure of his wife. The kindly services of a farmer procured her the shelter of a neighboring farmhouse.

Mr. Tucker knew from past experiences that his wife was an easy fainter, and after assuring himself that no bones were broken he left her for a few minutes that he might run out to seek for James, who might be at death's door.

He found him gazing upon the ruins of the wooden horse.

Upon learning that the man was uninjured he drew a bill from his pocket and said: "My boy, here's money for your expenses and your wages, and if there is any go in this machine, run her to New York and tell your people that they can have her as a gift. I am through with automobiles."

But a half-hour later Mrs. Tucker, fully conscious but somewhat weak, sat up on the bed in the farmer's best chamber and said:

"John, I think that if it had been a horse-

less automobile it wouldn't have been so bad."

Whereupon John overtook James just setting out for New York, and gave him an order for one horseless automobile.

And now John is convinced that his wife is a thoroughbred.

The Minister's Henhouse

REV. SIGOURNEY HARDWICKE, of South Hanaford, was very successful with hens. He had begun with a hen and twelve chickens which a neighbor had given him, and he now had a flock of fifty. Of course all this had not been accomplished without a severe attack of hen fever, but as the disease did not lead him to neglect his pastoral duties there was none in his flock—his human flock—who complained of his devotion to the feathered bipeds.

When he had but thirteen, an old dry-goods box slatted with laths was a sufficient shelter, and later, when his hatches averaged eleven to the setting, the woodshed sufficed to house them all; but now with fifty the woodshed was sadly inadequate, and unless he could manage to provide a

better abode for them before snow flew, his success with fowls would be numbered among the lost arts. Some men would have bought a hammer and a pound or two of nails, and would have knocked together a good enough henhouse, but although the Rev. Sigourney Hardwicke had a hypnotic way of encouraging hens to lay when other folk were vainly clamorous for eggs, and although he could bring the most fractious hen through the period of incubation without any desertion of nest, simply by moral suasion and the force of a good example, he hadn't the slightest skill in the use of tools.

The Rev. Mr. Hardwicke was short and stout and jolly, and it was said of him that the roosters crowed for joy at the sight of him, and the hens would hurry off to their nests to lay extra eggs for him whenever occasion demanded. He lived alone in the big parsonage—the last incumbent had had thirteen children and a wife—for although he believed, with the Bible, that it is not good

for man to be alone, yet he was still waiting for just the right helpmeet.

One morning, a few days before Thanksgiving, when to the typical country sounds had been added the pleasant noise of fowls scratching among fallen and crisp leaves, and the air was pungent with autumn smoke, Woodford Upham drove by the parsonage just as the parson came out of the kitchen door to feed his flock. They were all Black Langshans, and as handsome a group of birds as one would be likely to see outside of a poultry show, their merits appealing to layman and fancier alike.

Mr. Hardwicke had a peculiar call for his fowls. "Too—hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo," he sang in a resonant tenor, and the dusky birds came flocking from all corners of the field, where they had been scratching, to pick up the grain which their master was sowing broadcast. Was his Sunday flock as eager for spiritual sustenance?

Mr. Upham reined up. "Where in tarn

—where do you keep 'em?" said he, as the mob of fowls pushed and shoved like a human crowd at a public function.

"Well, they keep the woodshed warm holding 'em," said the minister with a chuckle. "I'm thinking seriously of giving up my study to them and taking to the woods myself."

Mr. Upham threw the reins over his horse's ample girth and got out of the wagon.

"They are pretty," said he emphatically. "I used to think that a hen was a hen, but I don't know——"

"Well, I've killed off all my roosters, so they really are hens," said the minister with a whimsical smile.

"Yes, but I mean I believe there is something in breed. You ought to have a henhouse. Your hens are gettin' themselves talked about a good deal. Mrs. Upham says it does her more good than a sermon to see the way you've managed to

make your hens pay. She never has eggs unless they're so plenty it would be scandalous not to, and she often asks me to find out how you manage it."

Mr. Hardwicke stooped over and stroked the greenish-black back of a matron of two summers. "That's it; I manage it. If a hen ought to lay and won't, I tempt her palate with hot food, and I talk to her a little and tuck her in at night, and she generally looks at it my way after a few days. If she's setting, and feels like visiting her neighbors instead of keeping her eggs warm, I talk a little more, and maybe shut her on her nest for a day or so, and she finally decides to stay by the ship like Captain Lawrence, and so I keep up my average of eleven to a brood. But in the hen business as in others eternal vigilance is the price of success."

"But you do need a henhouse," said Mr. Upham, stepping over to the diminutive woodshed and looking in.

"Yes, I do need a henhouse, but I don't suppose that the society would think one a part of my perquisites, as I may not be here for life. There's no telling how long you can stand my sermons."

"Well, I wouldn't make them any longer," said Mr. Upham solemnly; "but I don't know what we would have done for eggs last week when we had my wife's folks out to see us if we hadn't been able to draw on your supply, and I think it's the general opinion that your salary aint so princely but we can manage somehow to squeeze out enough to put up a henhouse. And if we ever do decide to get another minister—why, we'll have to see to it that he keeps hens before we give him a call."

Mortimer Wallace, the Shakespearian reader, had a summer home in South Hanaford, and he had gone in for fancy fowls for a time, but although he had read in Shakespeare that there is a tide in the affairs of men which leads on to fortune, he was

out of town when the flood tide came, and so he reluctantly decided to sell the Buff Cochins, for which he had paid fancy prices, at the local quotation on fowls, which was fifty cents a head—weight no objection.

His last hen sold, he suffered a revulsion of feeling against henkind in general, and he longed to sell his henhouse that he might forget that hens existed.

But to take it up and move it by ox-power would double its cost, and, besides, South Hanaford farmers thought it a trifle too ornate for every-day egg-laying, and so he found no takers, although he set a tempting price upon it. But when Mr. Upham drove away from the minister's he happened to pass the Wallace henhouse, and he immediately thought that here were two wants that offset each other—Mortimer Wallace's wish to be rid of his perpetual reminder of his failure as a fancier, and the minister's desire for an adequate dwelling for his thriving fowls.

He spoke of it to Deacon Abner Curtis the next Sunday while they were waiting for the close of Sunday school. It had been an immemorial custom for the older men to gather together on the church steps and get rid of non-churchly thoughts by talking them out before service began.

"You know that Wallace wants to sell his henhouse, and it's about time that we bought the parson a place for his chickens to roost in. He's shown he's the only man, woman, or child in these parts that understands hens, and I don't see why we couldn't buy Wallace's building and move it over to the parson's. Thanksgiving Day comes this week, and it would be a han'some thing to do."

"Haow fur is it?" asked Deacon Curtis.

"Half a mile."

"I think it's a good projec' fer the young people's society. The church moved the chapel an' paid fer the noo stove, and it's

time the young people did somethin'. What's Wallace want fer it?"

Mr. Upham bowed pleasantly to the minister, who was just entering the church. "Twenty dollars," said he.

"Twenty dollars fer that hidjus bloo buildin'? His wants aint small."

"Well, what is it worth? Suppose you was sellin' it."

"Oh, that's different. I never sold no henhouses an' I dunno what I'd ask, but I'd never pay twenty dollars fer no henhouse. No hens 'd be wuth it. Why can't the pastor knock one together himself?"

"He aint got the gift of the hammer."

The bell, which had been tolling, now stopped, and the moaning of the melodeon gave notice of the end of worldly discussions; but at the prayer meeting in the evening it was proposed by the President of the Christian Endeavor Society that Mr. Wallace be approached and sounded as to the

least figure for which he would part with his henhouse.

Monday morning a deputation waited on him just as he was starting out to fill a lecture engagement. He asked the spokesman to jump into his buggy and drive with him to the station, and on the way there William Curtis, Abner's son, asked him what was his rock-bottom price for selling the henhouse.

"Well, I wanted twenty, but I'll sell it to him, or to you for him, for fifteen dollars because he's been able to do what I failed to do—make hens lay."

They had now arrived at the station, and a few minutes later Mr. Wallace went to Boston to read "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and Curtis reported the conversation to the treasurer of the society.

It was the opinion of those who had been so fortunate as to taste it that there was no one in South Hanaford, or in Hanaford Center, for that matter, who could make

such orange cake as Mrs. Wallace. The feathery sponge cake, the delicious orange filling, and the orange frosting, so thick and sweet, would have been worthy of the great Savarin himself, if Savarin ever knew anything as delicious as orange layer cake. Mrs. Wallace was conscious of her genius in this particular line, and when her next-door neighbor, pretty Zoë Moulton, came and asked her if she would be willing to make one of her cakes for an ice-cream festival that was to be given at the Congregational church Wednesday evening, she, being a most obliging woman, willingly consented, although she and her husband were Swedenborgians. Zoë hurried away, conscious that whoever else might make a cake, to her would belong the honor of securing the cake of cakes, the *pièce de résistance* of the whole festival.

Young people delight in committees, and one committee never knows what another committee has done, which may account for

the fact that upon Mr. Wallace's return from his Boston trip he found the following letter awaiting him:

DEAR MR. WALLACE: You have always shown yourself to be public spirited, and I have been asked on behalf of our young people to request you to give us a reading at a little jollification we intend holding next Wednesday. Anything you want to read will be listened to with delight. I have been requested to write this letter by the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, of which, unfortunately, I am not a member, owing to age limitations.

Yours cordially,

SIGOURNEY HARDWICKE.

This was not the first time that Mr. Wallace had been asked to recite—for his health. There are no people who are expected to give so much for nothing as entertainers in various lines—unless it be ministers. Perhaps it was a fellow-feeling that made the lecturer sit down and say that he would be delighted to accede to the request. He, whose date-book was full to repletion and for whom bureaus fought, graciously consented to read for the young people, as it happened

to be an open date with him. The "jollification" was a great success, and not only was all South Hanaford there, but many people drove out from Simsbury, glad to hear Wallace read for twenty-five cents admission. In Hartford he charged a dollar. He was in fine form, and responded to encores until his throat might well have been raw.

After the literary entertainment was concluded, the entertainer and his wife sought the tables where confections were to be dispensed—for a consideration. In order to make sure that the cake was good, Mr. Wallace chose that which his wife had made, and he cheerfully paid thirty cents for that and the ice-cream, fifteen cents a plate being the sum usually charged at suppers and festivals in the church.

When Mr. Hardwicke came up to congratulate Mr. Wallace on the undeniable hit that he had made, the latter "blew him off" to cake, if one may be pardoned so worldly

an expression as applied to so good a man as the parson.

While the supper was in progress, William Curtis arose and, in the halting way, not peculiar to him alone, said: "I—er—take pleasure in announcing on behalf of the —er—Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, that we have taken in this evening a—er—trifle over twenty dollars, and the sale of cake will bring half as much again. I want to thank those who—er—who donated the cake, and I think—er—that we all think—er—that we ought to thank—er—Mr. Wallace for responding so generously with his choice selections. We wondered how we could afford to do what we—er—wanted to do, and if it had not been for his kindness in reducing the price of his henhouse in the first place, and then in—er—kindly consenting to give us his—er—more than valuable services this—er—evening, it would not have been possible for us to purchase his henhouse and present it as a—er—

Thanksgiving offering to our—er—beloved and worthy pastor."

When he sat down with a moist forehead and a sense of having done his duty he was astonished to hear a hearty and general guffaw follow a momentary silence. In the midst of it, and while Mr. Curtis was wondering what had caused it, Mr. Wallace and the Rev. Mr. Hardwicke, moved by similar impulses, arose and walked toward each other and shook hands.

Then Mr. Hardwicke said with unction, "This is undoubtedly good old New England."

The Men Who Swapped Languages

THERE are many persons in the world to whom some of the facts in this story will seem improbable. I have no fault to find with them. Thirty years ago they would have said that the phonograph was not only improbable, but impossible. I cannot explain how M. Jean Albertin obtained entire command of Howard Benton's remarkably fine English vocabulary any more than I can explain how the phonograph so successfully catches the sound of the human voice and reduces it to an absurd squeak. I know that it does this thing, and I know that M. Albertin not only secured the English speech of his friend, but gave him his own equally great command of French, just as men exchange pieces of real estate.

It may be worth while to go somewhat into detail in this matter. M. Albertin was about to go to America in the interest of a French house, and he had absolutely no English beyond a few rather idiotic phrases. He was a man of fine natural ability and attainments, with a charm of manner that made friends for him among all classes. Indeed although thoroughly at home among the most cultivated, he was fond of seeking acquaintances among the lowly born merely that he might study the manners of man in all walks of life, and it was this democratic tendency that was the cause of his undoing.

M. Albertin believed that what was worth doing at all was worth doing well, but he lacked the time to learn English, as his American trip was undertaken on the spur of the moment. A few days before he sailed he met in a café his good friend Howard Benton, of Boston, who—it may be a mere coincidence—is acquainted with both Nikola Tesla and Thomas Edison, although he

himself is not an inventor, but a man of leisure.

Benton, although a university man, was unable to speak French fluently, although, strange to say, he could write it exceedingly well. But he was devoting much of his leisure time to the mastery of the oral language. These dry details are absolutely necessary to the proper understanding of the subsequent events.

Now we come to the unexplainable part. I was an ear witness, but I can offer no explanations. I was sitting at a neighboring table; I knew them both slightly, and there is no manner of doubt that on a sudden M. Albertin began to speak an English as idiomatic and pure as the best. And Benton replied in a faultless French.

Both burst out laughing as gleefully as children, and said something that I did not catch, and then came mutual congratulations.

"I would have been willing to pay you

for your language," said Mr. Benton, "but if we exchange I fancy that one is as valuable as the other, as mine is of the Boston variety, and has been handed down from father to son for seven generations, and I certainly recognize the perfection of yours."

After a little desultory conversation Albertin suddenly burst out laughing. "Upon my word," said he naïvely, "I did not suppose that I spoke French with such distinction. It amuses me to hear the actual tongue that I have been wagging all my life. But please be careful of it. Don't let it get broken."

Then, in high good humor, they pledged each other's health. Benton's last words as they left the café together were: "Do be careful of my dear old tongue, for if I ever do return to America I want enough language to properly berate the Customs officers."

M. Albertin shortly afterward went to

New York. He carried with him valuable letters that opened to him the doors of the most desirable people, both American and French, and his masterly use of English, added to his charms of mind and manner, made him much sought after. It was thought queer that he never uttered a word of French, but it was attributed to a species of vanity, as some of his compatriots who had known him in Paris knew his facile use of the language of Molière. He was not a babbler about his own affairs, and if Americans thought him odd because he talked a better English than nine-tenths of the New Yorkers, his self-conceit was tickled. For strangely enough he was proud of his command of this tongue that had come to him already prepared like Chicago canned tongue. On the other hand, if his compatriots, especially those who had heard and known him in Paris, were puzzled because he always replied to their French in ready English, he implied that they had better go

and do likewise, and give over their "wizzes" and "zats."

From time to time he picked up French words and phrases, just as any American does, but he was not by nature a linguist, and he would never gain the careless ease and rapid flow that had been characteristic of his speech at home.

It has been said that M. Albertin had a taste for all kinds of life, and when he found himself in New York—that city of astonishing contrasts—he took frequent opportunities for gratifying the taste. In turn, "Chinatown," "Little Italy," and all the various settlements of the Castle Garden graduates were visited by him, and he scraped acquaintance with representatives of every country on the map of Europe. But neither Pole, nor Italian, nor German amused him as much as did the New York "tough." M. Albertin had a sense of humor, and the metaphors and the exaggerations of the Bowery boy appealed to him as

they had appealed to Thackeray nearly forty years before.

Upon one of these excursions into low life M. Albertin fell in with a gentleman by the name of Buck Mulrennan, a man whose speech was picturesque as the Rocky Mountains, and who was said to have been the original of many a newspaper sketch. And Buck found something to admire in this affable Frenchman who was such a "slick chinner." One evening during a conversation between the two in a Bowery music hall, M. Albertin was seized with the mad whim of temporarily swapping speech with Mr. Mulrennan.

The exchange was made, and M. Albertin, who was feeling somewhat gay, treated the affair as a huge joke. He roared with laughter at hearing Buck use words and phrases, and a style of enunciation that had been foreign to him for generations—to put it mildly. As for Buck, he entered into the spirit of the thing, and was amused

at hearing the elegant M. Albertin use colloquialisms and slang of the East Side, and the two passed an evening of real delight in each other's company. But when the Frenchman went to his hotel he unaccountably neglected to re-exchange the two very diversified specimens of speech, and thus Buck was enabled to visit several "cafés" (to use a pleasant "Puritanism") to show off his new acquirement.

M. Albertin lived at the Schiedam-Haarlem Hotel. Something was the matter with the steam pipes the next morning, and he summoned a hall boy. When the boy came M. Albertin opened the door and said, with the charm of manner that distinguished him:

"Soy, cully, w'at t'ell's de matter wit der heat? Me back bone is an icicle an' me blood 'll lose its charter if it don't begin runnin' again soon. Pump some heat up an' be —— quick. See?"

This from courtesy itself was sufficiently

stupefying, but it was nothing to the language the Frenchman used to the hotel clerk some minutes later.

That functionary thought that M. Albertin had taken leave of his senses, and so did the waiter, who, on approaching the breakfast table at which the Parisian sat was greeted with, "Ah, git a move on."

"Yes, sir. Cold morning, sir. What shall it be this morning, sir?"

"Bring me a stack of wheats an' some hot Scotch."

"Hot Scotch at breakfast, sir?" said the waiter, surprised out of his usual self-control.

"Gee, can't youse take a joke? I mean hot Scotch oatmeal. An' soy, folly dat up wit' a dish er chuck an' a moiphey on der half shell. Come, sherry yer nibs, now."

Of course, the waiter understood M. Albertin, for he had been born and brought up in the Ninth himself, but the language

sounded out of place in the beautiful breakfast room of the Schiedam-Haarlem.

As for M. Albertin, what had seemed a good joke by gaslight was a hideous thing in the light of day, and the perspiration was pouring down his face in spite of the trouble with the steam pipes. He knew too well what had happened. It had been a hazy jest the night before, but now, unless he could find Buck and induce him to return his tongue, it was an irrevocable and dreadful reality.

During the rest of the meal he fell back upon the little French that he had managed to pick up from his compatriots, and he summoned the head waiter, who was a Frenchman, to attend him. But it was anything but an amelioration of his woe, for the head waiter, of course, knew M. Albertin's nationality, and could hardly conceal his contempt for a man who had so poor a grasp of his mother tongue.

The breakfast over, M. Albertin opened

the morning paper and found two items of the most awful interest to him. One was in the nature of a reminder. His ease in English had led to his being called upon to speak at various dinners, and this was an announcement of the annual dinner of the Chaucer Society at the Harland House. It ran: "Among the speakers will be that accomplished linguist, M. Albertin, who outrivals the Chinese Ambassador in his grasp of an alien language. He will respond to the toast, 'The Purity of English; May it Never Grow Less.'"

With what pleasure he had looked forward to this occasion! With what apt quotations from "The Canterbury Tales" would he have interlarded his speech. With what pride would he have watched the growing interest in the faces of his auditors as he, a foreigner, tossed airy phrases off his tongue as a child throws bubbles from a pipe bowl! But now——!

But the other piece of news was a crusher.

"BUCK MULRENNAN KILLED FOR HIS TONGUE. TOO MUCH WILLIE-BOY."

This was the elegant headline, and the news was that Buck had been shot dead by an inebriated longshoreman who objected to the ultra-polished language of an erstwhile tough.

"Dere goes Bent'n's langwidge," said M. Albertin out loud, but to himself he thought in French:

"Oh, how miserable! How can I ever face my friend Benton again? I have lost the language of which he told me to be so careful. And the poor Buck. That it should be my fault that he thus meets the death."

Sympathy for his quondam acquaintance was, however, swallowed up in an overwhelming pity for himself when he should acquaint Benton with his irreparable loss. He could not make it good in any way. It was a debt of honor which he could not repay. Why had he allowed his tongue to

wander even for a night? He put on his coat and hat and walked out of doors, here, there, anywhere. Should he attend the banquet, and in broken French talk about the preservation of the purity of English? Should he stay away and thus insult the men who were honoring France in honoring him? He could see no way open to him that brought peace with honor.

He found himself at last on an elevated train, and with instinctive politeness he rose to give his seat to a lady who entered the car soon after.

She, with a gracious bow and smile, refused it. "I am going but a few blocks," said she.

"Ah, g'wan. Take der seat. Wouldn't I look like a gilly sittin' an' youse standin'? Take der seat, loidy, take der seat."

Covered with confusion, the lady sank into the seat, and M. Albertin, blushing scarlet, went out upon the platform to try to forget himself, for the whole car-full was in

a titter at the incongruity between his language and his dress and manner. But this incident gave him a cue for his action in the evening.

In the afternoon he went back to the hotel and found a cablegram from Paris calling him back on the next steamer. The reason for his desired return would have filled him with joy the day before, as it was no less than the announcement of a legacy of several hundred thousand francs, but now a prompt return meant a speedy meeting with the man whom he had so cruelly robbed of his language. And there was still the dinner. That would take place before the steamer sailed——!

But the dinner would now take care of itself, thanks to his experience on the train. To-day was Friday. He would make an ass of himself at the banquet and then go directly to the steamer, and in a few hours he would be detached from most of his sublunary troubles, for a week at least, and it

might turn out that Howard Benton would have no further use for his language, and would be willing to settle for its loss on a money basis which, thanks to the legacy, it would be perfectly possible to meet.

He kept as quiet as possible, and went over and over in his mind the speech of the evening. He had luncheon served in his room, and went from the hotel to the banquet hall without speaking to a soul, paying the cabman with a wealth of dumb show.

"Poor feller," said the latter, as he got up on the box after depositing M. Albertin at the door of the Harland House. "It's a turribil afflicshin to be widout visible manes of spache."

Luckily M. Albertin was a little late for the dinner, and was seated between two slightly deaf men who were perfectly willing to do all the talking themselves, and it was not until he was called upon for a speech that he had to do more than respond in monosyllables.

He rose in his seat and all eyes were fixed upon him. As has been hinted, he already had a New York reputation as a witty and singularly facile after-dinner speaker whose matter was as good as his manner, and his language more felicitous than either.

He slowly scanned the expectant diners with a preternaturally grave face.

"Chairman an' Gents all, ah dere!" (astonishment and puzzled laughter). "I have been ast ter respon' to der toas' 'Der Purerty of Englush.' Gee, dat's a hot bunch of grapes fer me to han'le, but it's up to me, an' I s'pose I'm nex'.

"Der mos' of der gang er spiketails here knows dat I'm a Frenchy. Me farder an' me mudder was bot' natives of der red-hot city an' in me chil'hood on'y der pures' French dat could be got was inserted in me talk box be means of me ears. W'are an' how I got der same twist on Englush it wouldn' interes' youse ter hear ter-night, but I got me hooks on it wit'out damergin'

der goods—as youse kin see—an' I'm here ter-night ter give youse points on der preservation of it. No, not Five Points, as der feelintropical gent at me left has sergested. Five Points is a dead issue.

"Mos' of us gits der accent in our yout' dat we're go'n' ter carry to der undertaker's garden. Dere has been cases of people loinin' ter talk like a Harvard perfesser w'en deir boyhood hadn' been foun' guilty of grammar, but it's not comm'n. Derefore der bes' way fer a kid ter fill his nut full of a choice an' hollerday assortment of Englush is to hear nut'n' but der mos' carefully selectet bran's all t'rough his kidhood."

Already his speech was a success. This Frenchman who could take the salient points of tough speech and caricature them to befit his use and do it, too, with such an unconscious air, was worth a half-dozen ordinary pedantic talkers. Here and there were shocked faces, but these mostly belonged to men who lived too far from New York to

recognize the dialect. The younger men hailed it with delight and it is to be feared that it would have a deteriorating effect upon their own accents, so imitative are the young in great cities.

"Many Americ'ns" (he went on) "are fon' of der use of slang. Dey t'ink it's smart, an' dey put inter use a woid dat is hot from der griddle. But woids, like Rome, can't be built in a day, an' it's much better to use on'y dose dat c'n show der badge of der fifty-year-ol' dictionaries, an' w'y? Because it's a t'ousan' times better to put a langwidge on stilts dan on crutches.

"So, in conclusion, lemme say, T'ink beefore youse speak, an' let yer speech be golden, an' der bes' way to make it so is to keep silence—fer silence is golden. See? An' dat lets me out."

After the speech was finished certain members of the Chaucer Society wanted to carry M. Albertin around the room on their shoulders, but with many shrugs and point-

ings to the cablegram and the clock, he made his way to the coat-room and thence to the steamer, whither he had caused his baggage to be sent.

Next morning, just before he sailed, he bought a bundle of morning papers, fully prepared to be held up to ridicule by the reporters; but to his real astonishment he found that he had become famous in a single night. Some reported the speech in full, and M. Albertin was amused to see how the spellings of the dialect differed. All united in saying that as an inverted object lesson on purity of diction it was one of the happiest efforts in the annals of post-prandial eloquence and worthy of the occasion.

"Ah, well," thought M. Albertin, "I leave in time. I have known when to stop, and my reputation will increase in the retrospect. I could not have kept it up." And then the steamer swung out and he immediately retired to his cabin, for he was not a good sailor.

When he reached France he acted like an honorable man. He first sought out Howard Benton and told him what had happened to his tongue. As he said, "I can't do nut'n but pay yer fer it an' ask fer me own chin-music back. Youse had a good grip on French beefore, so youse won't fall down, but wit'out me French I'm a dead farmer over here."

Howard Benton saw the justice of his plea and settled with him for the loss of his language on a basis of ten thousand dollars. And then, being robbed of his pure French, he went to work to learn it in the ordinary way, and in a year's time he had conquered it.

Returning voyagers often brought to M. Albertin reports of the esteem as an impersonating speaker that he had gained in New York, but he was too wise to return, as he really had not the slightest native skill in rendering dialects and was quite content to rest on his easily acquired laurels.

What might have been a great disaster to him and to Mr. Benton had happily been averted by the news in the telegram. If Benton had been less of a cosmopolite—which is a euphemism for one whose love of country has abated—he might have longed to go home and talk the speech of his youth, and then his uncouth dialect would have been a hindrance to him, but he rarely used it, as most of his friends were Frenchmen.

Now and then, in a spirit of mischief, he aired it in order to test Frenchmen's ears, and once he visited the Salon in company with a venerable French jurist and, pausing before one of Whistler's paintings, he said: "Soy, Munseer Chartrooce, dere's a 'siffleuse' dat may pipe off der key now an' den, but ully gee! who wouldn' like to swipe his pipes?"

And M. Chartreuse replied in French:

"Do you know that I can understand the Britons when they speak English, but while

your American has a droll sound, it is like German to me. I fancy it has the strength of a growing tongue."

"Right you are, Munseer," said Benton. "It's growin' ter beat der ban'."

While the Automobile Ran Down

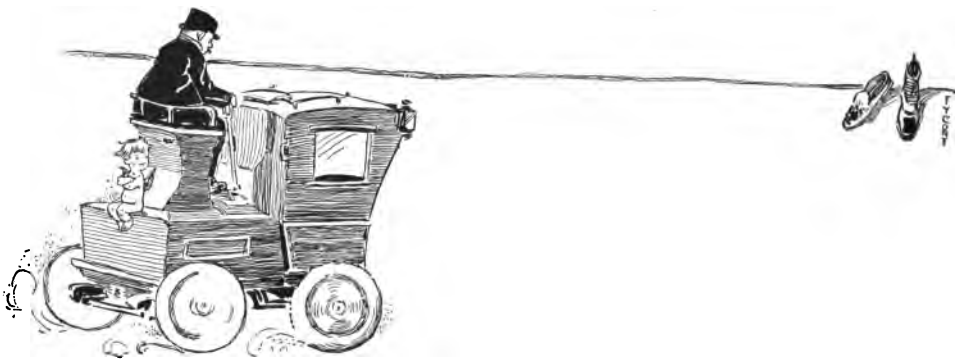
A Christmas Extravaganza

IT was a letter to encourage a hesitating lover, and certainly Orville Thornton, author of "Thoughts for Non-Thinkers," came under that head. He received it on a Tuesday, and immediately made up his mind to declare his intentions to Miss Annette Badeau that evening.

But perhaps the contents of the letter will help the reader to a better understanding of the case.

DEAR ORVILLE: Miss Badeau sails unexpectedly for Paris on the day after Christmas, her aunt Madge having cabled her to come and visit her. Won't you come to Christmas dinner? I've invited the Joe Burtons, and of course Mr. Marten will be there, but no others—except Miss Badeau.

Dinner will be at sharp seven. Don't be late, although I know you won't, you human time-table.



LOVE BY AUTO.

I do hope that Annette will not fall in love in Paris. I wish that she would marry some nice New Yorker and settle near me.

I've always thought that you have neglected marriage shamefully.

Remember to-morrow night, and Annette sails on Thursday. Wishing you a Merry Christmas, I am,

Your old friend,

HENRIETTA MARTEN.

Annette Badeau had come across the line of Orville's vision three months before. She was Mrs. Marten's niece, and had come from the West to live with her aunt at just about the time that the success of Thornton's book made him think of marriage.

She was pretty and bright and expansive in a Western way, and when Thornton met her at one of the few afternoon teas that he ever attended he fell in love with her. When he learned that she was the niece of his lifelong friend, Mrs. Marten, he suddenly discovered various reasons why he should call at the Marten house once or twice a week.

But a strange habit he had of putting off

delightful moments in order to enjoy anticipation to its fullest extent had caused him to refrain from disclosing the state of his heart to Miss Badeau, and so that young woman, who had fallen in love with him even before she knew that he was the gifted author of "Thoughts for Non-Thinkers," often wished to herself that she could in some way give him a hint of the state of *her* heart.

Orville received Mrs. Marten's letter on Christmas Eve, and its contents made him plan a schedule for the next evening's running. No power on earth could keep him away from that dinner, and he immediately sent a telegram of regret to the Bell-wether of the Wolves' Club, although he had been anticipating the Christmas gorge for a month.

He also sent a messenger with a note of acceptance to Mrs. Marten. . . .

Then he joined the crowd of persons who always wait until Christmas Eve before buy-

ing the presents that stern and unpleasant duty makes it necessary to get.

It would impart a characteristic Christmas flavor if it were possible to cover the ground with snow, and to make the air merry with the sound of flashing belts of silvery sleigh-bells on prancing horses; but although Christmases in stories are always snowy and frosty, and sparkling with ice-crystals, Christmases in real life are apt to be damp and humid. Let us be thankful that this Christmas was merely such a one as would not give a ghost of a reason for a trip to Florida. The mercury stood at 58, and even light overcoats were not things to be put on without thought.

Orville knew what he wished to get and where it was sold, and so he had an advantage over ninety-nine out of a hundred of the anxious-looking shoppers who were scuttling from shop to shop, burdened with bundles, and making the evening the worst in the year for tired sales-girls and -men.

Orville's present was not exactly Christmassy, but he hoped that Miss Badeau would like it, and it was certainly the finest one on the velvet tray. Orville, it will be seen, was of a sanguine disposition.

He did not hang up his stocking; he had not done that for several years; but he did dream that Santa Claus brought him a beautiful doll from Paris, and just as he was saying, "There must be some mistake," the doll turned into Miss Badeau and said: "No, I'm for you. Merry Christmas!" Then he woke up and thought how foolish and yet how fascinating dreams are.

Christmas morning was spent in polishing up an old essay on "The Value of the Summer as an Invigorator." It had long been a habit of his to work over old stuff on his holidays, and if he was about to marry he would need to sell everything he had—of a literary-marketable nature. But this morning a vision of a lovely girl who on the morrow was going to sail thousands of

miles away came between him and the page, and at last he tossed the manuscript into a drawer and went out for a walk.

It was the draggiest Christmas he had ever known, and the warmest. He dropped in at the club, but there was hardly anyone there; still, he did manage to play a few games of billiards, and at last the clock announced that it was time to go home and dress for the Christmas dinner.

It was half-past five when he left the club. It was twenty minutes to six when he slipped on a piece of orange-peel and measured his length on the sidewalk. He was able to rise and hobble up the steps on one foot, but the hall-boy had to help him to the elevator and thence to his room. He dropped upon his bed, feeling white about the gills.

Orville was a most methodical man. He planned his doings days ahead and seldom changed his schedule. But it seemed likely that unless he was built of sterner stuff than most of the machines called men, he would

not run out of the round-house to-night. His fall had given his foot a nasty wrench.

Some engineers, to change the simile, would have argued that the engine was off the track, and that therefore the train was not in running condition; but Orville merely changed engines. His own steam having been cut off, he ordered an automobile for twenty minutes to seven; and after he had bathed and bandaged his ankle he determined, with a grit worthy of the cause that brought it forth, to attend that dinner even if he paid for it in the hospital, with Annette as special nurse.

Old Mr. Nickerson, who lived across the hall, had heard of his misfortune, and called to proffer his services.

"Shall I help you get to bed?" said he.

"I am not due in bed, Mr. Nickerson, for many hours; but if you will give me a few fingers of your excellent old Scotch, with the bouquet of smoked herring, I will go on dressing for dinner."

"Dear boy," said the old gentleman, almost tearfully, "it is impossible for you to venture on your foot with such a sprain. It is badly swollen."

"Mr. Nickerson, my heart has received a worse wrench than my foot has, therefore I go out to dine." At sound of which enigmatical declaration Mr. Nickerson hurried off for the old Scotch, and in a few minutes Orville's faintness had passed off, and with help from the amiable old man he got into his evening clothes—with the exception of his left foot, which was incased in a flowered slipper of sunset red.

"Now, my dear Mr. Nickerson, I'm a thousand times obliged to you, and if I can get you to help me hop downstairs I will wait for the automobile on the front stoop." (Orville had been born in Brooklyn, where they still have "stoops.") "I'm on time so far."

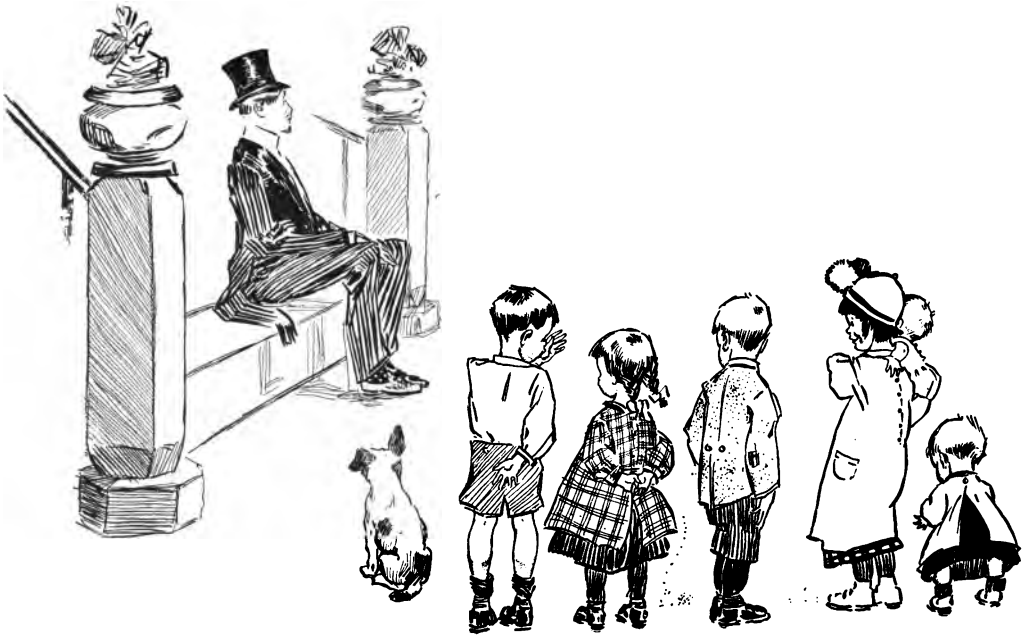
But if Orville was on time, the automobile was not, the driver not being a meth-

odical man; and when it did come, it was all the motorman could do to stop it. It seemed restive.

"You ought to shut off on the oats," said Orville gayly, from his seat on the lowest step of the "stoop."

The picture of a gentleman in immaculate evening clothes, with the exception of a somewhat rococo carpet slipper, seemed to amuse some street children who were passing. If they could have followed the "auto" they would have been even more diverted, but such was not to be their fortune. Mr. Nickerson helped his friend into the vehicle, and the driver started at a lively rate for Fifth Avenue.

Orville lived in Seventeenth Street, near Fifth Avenue; Mrs. Marten lived on Fifth Avenue, near Fortieth Street. Thirty-eighth Street and Thirty-ninth Street were reached and passed without further incident than the fact that Orville's ankle pained him almost beyond the bearing-point; but, as it



"A GENTLEMAN IN IMMACULATE EVENING CLOTHES."—P. 260.

is not the history of a sprained ankle that I am writing, if the vehicle had stopped at Mrs. Marten's my pen would not have been set to paper.

But the motor-wagon did not even pause. It kept on as if the Harlem River were to be its next stop.

Orville had stated the number of his destination with distinctness, and he now rang the annunciator and asked the driver why he did not stop.

Calmly, in the even tones that clear-headed persons use when they wish to inspire confidence, the chauffeur said: "Don't be alarmed, sir, but I can't stop. There's something out of kilter, and I may have to run some time before I can get the hang of it. There's no danger as long as I can steer."

"Can't you slacken up in front of the house, so that I can jump?"

"With that foot, sir? Impossible, and, anyway, I can't slacken up. I think we'll

stop soon. I don't know when it was charged, but a gentleman had it before I was sent out with it. It won't be long, I think. I'll run around the block, and maybe I can stop the next time."

Orville groaned for a twofold reason: his ankle was jumping with pain, and he would lose the pleasure of taking Miss Badeau in to dinner, for it was a minute past seven.

He sat and gazed at his carpet slipper, and thought of the daintily shod feet of the adorable Annette, as the horseless carriage wound around the block. As they approached the house again, Orville imagined that they were slackening up, and he opened the door to be ready. It was now three minutes past seven, and dinner had begun beyond a doubt. The driver saw the door swing open, and said: "Don't jump, sir. I can't stop yet. I'm afraid there's a good deal of run in the machine."

Orville looked up at the brownstone front

of the house with an agonized stare, as if he would pull Mrs. Marten to the window by the power of his eyes. But Mrs. Marten was not in the habit of pressing her nose against the pane in an anxious search for tardy guests. In fact, it may be asserted with confidence that it is not a Fifth Avenue custom.

At that moment the purée was being served to Mrs. Marten's guests, and to pretty Annette Badeau, who really looked disconsolate with the vacant chair beside her.

"Something has happened to Orville," said Mrs. Marten, looking over her shoulder toward the hall door, "for he is punctuality itself."

Mr. Joe Burton was a short, red-faced little man, with black mutton-chop whiskers of the style of '76, and a way of looking in the most cheerful manner upon the dark side of things. "Dessay he's been run over," said he choppily. "Wonder anyone escapes. Steam-, gasoline-, electric-, horse-

flesh-, man-propelled juggernauts. Ought to be prohibited."

Annette could not repress a shudder. Her aunt saw it, and said: "Orville will never be run over. He's too wide-awake. But it is very singular."

"He may have been detained by an order for a story," said Mr. Marten, also with the amiable purpose of consoling Annette. For both of the Martens knew how she felt toward Mr. Thornton.

"Maybe he's lying on the front sidewalk, hit by a sign or bitten by a dog. Dogs ought not to be allowed in the city; they only add to the dangers of metropolitan existence," jerked out Mr. Burton, in blithe tones, totally unaware that his remarks might worry Annette.

"Dear me! I wish you'd send someone out to see, Aunt Henrietta."

"Nonsense, Annette. Mr. Burton is always an alarmist. But, Marie, you might step to the front door and look down the

avenue. Mr. Thornton is always so punctual that it is peculiar."

Marie went to the front door and looked down the street just as Thornton, gesticulating wildly, disappeared around the corner of Fortieth Street.

"Oh, why didn't she come sooner!" said he aloud to himself. "At least they would know why I'm late. And she'll be gone before I come round again. Was there ever such luck? Oh for a good old horse that could stop, a dear old nag that would pause and not go round and round like a blamed carrousel! Say, driver, isn't there any way of stopping this cursed thing? Can't you run it into a fence or a house? I'll take the risk."

"But *I* won't, sir. These automobiles are very powerful, and one of them turned over a newsstand not long since and upset the stove in it, and nearly burned up the newsman. But there's a plenty of time for it to stop. I don't have to hurry back."

"That's lucky," said Orville. "I thought maybe you'd have to leave me alone with the thing. But, say, she may run all night. Here I am due at a dinner. I'm tired of riding. This is no way to spend Christmas. Slacken up, and I'll jump when I get around there again."

"I tell you I can't slacken up, and she's going ten miles an hour. You'll break your leg if you jump, and then where'll you be?"

"I might be on their sidewalk, and then you could ring their bell, and they'd take me in."

"And have you suing the company for damages? Oh, no, sir. I'm sorry, but it can't be helped. The company won't charge you for the extra time."

"No, I don't think it will," said Thornton savagely, the more so as his foot gave a twinge of pain just then.

"There was no one in sight, ma'am," said Marie when she returned.

"Probably he had an order for a story and got absorbed in it and forgot us," said Mr. Marten; but this conjecture did not seem to suit Annette, for it did not fit what she knew of his character.

"Possibly he was dropped in an elevator," said Mr. Burton. "Strain on elevators, particularly these electrical ones, is tremendous. Some of 'em have got to drop. And a dropping elevator is no respecter of persons. You and I may be in one when it drops. Probably he was. Sure, I hope not, but as he is known to be the soul of punctuality, we must put forward some accident to account for his lateness. People aren't always killed in elevator accidents. Are they, my dear?"

"Mr. Burton," said his wife, "I wish you would give your morbid thoughts a rest. Don't you see that Annette is sensitive?"

"Sensitive—with someone dying every minute? It's merely because she happens to know Orville that his death would be un-

pleasant. If a man in the Klondike were to read of it in the paper he wouldn't remember it five minutes. But I don't say he was in an elevator. Maybe someone sent him an infernal machine for a Christmas present. May have been blown up in a manhole or jumped from his window to avoid flames. Why, there are a million ways to account for his absence."

Marie had opened the parlor windows a moment before, as the house was warm, and now there came the humming of a rapidly moving automobile. Mingled with it they heard distinctly, although faintly, "Mr. Marten, here I go."

It gave them all an uncanny feeling. The fish was left untouched, and for a moment silence reigned. Then Mr. Marten sprang from the table and ran to the front door. He got there just in time to see an automobile dashing around a corner and to hear a distinctly articulated imprecation in the well-known voice of Orville Thornton.

"MR. MARTIN, HERE I GO!"—P. 268.

In evening clothes and bareheaded, Mr. Marten ran to Fortieth Street, and saw the vehicle approaching Sixth Avenue, its occupant still hurling strong language upon the evening air. Mr. Marten is something of a sprinter, although he has passed the fifty mark, and he resolved to solve the mystery. But before he had covered a third of the block in Fortieth Street he saw that he could not hope to overtake the runaway automobile, so he turned and ran back to the house, rightly surmising that the driver would circle the block.

When he reached his own doorstep, badly winded, he saw the automobile coming full tilt up the avenue from Thirty-ninth Street.

The rest of the diners were on the steps. "I think he's coming," he panted. "The driver must be intoxicated."

A moment later they were treated to the spectacle of Orville, still hurling imprecations as he wildly gesticulated with both arms. Several boys were trying to keep up

with the vehicle, but the pace was too swift. No policeman had yet discovered its rotary course.

As Orville came near the Marten mansion he cried "Ah-h-h!" in the relieved tones of one who has been falling for half an hour, and at last sees ground in sight.

"What's the matter?" shouted Mr. Marten wonderingly, as the carriage, instead of stopping, sped along the roadway.

"Sprained foot. Can't walk. Auto out of order. Can't stop. Good-by till I come round again. Awful hungry. Merry Christmas!"

"Ah ha!" said Joe Burton. "I told you that it was an accident. Sprained his foot and lost power over vehicle. I don't see the connection, but let us be thankful that he isn't under the wheels, with a broken neck, or winding round and round the axle."

"But what's to be done?" said Mrs. Marten. "He says he's hungry."

"Tell you what!" said Mr. Burton, in his

"I THINK HE'S COMING!"—P. 269.

explosive way. "Put some food on a plate, and when the carriage comes round again I'll jump aboard, and he can eat as he travels."

"He loves purée of celery," said Mrs. Marten.

"Very well. Put some in a clean lard-pail or a milk-pail. Little out of the ordinary, but so is the accident, and he can't help his hunger. Hunger is no disgrace. I didn't think he'd ever eat soup again, to tell the truth. I was making up my mind whether a wreath or a harp would be better."

"Oh, you are so morbid, Mr. Burton," said his wife, while Mrs. Marten told the maid to get a pail and put some purée into it.

When Thornton came around again he met Mr. Marten near Thirty-ninth Street.

"Open the door, Orville, and Joe Burton will get aboard with some soup. You must be starved."

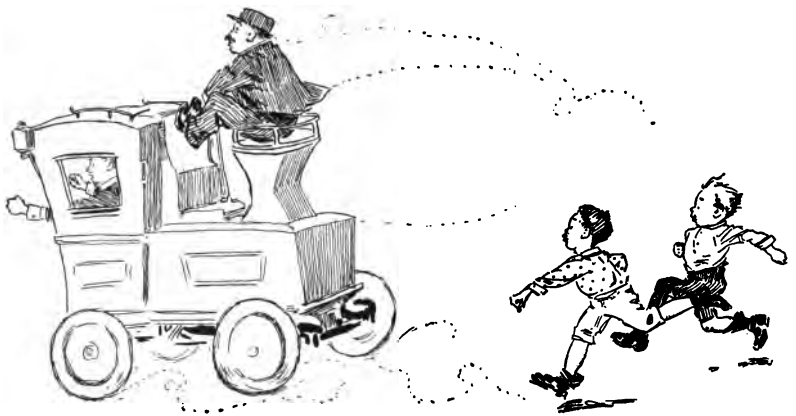
"There's nothing like exercise for get-

ting up an appetite. I'll be ready for Burton," said Orville. "Awfully sorry I can't stop and talk; but I'll see you again in a minute or two."

He opened the door as he spoke, and then, to the great delight of at least a score of people who had realized that the automobile was running away, the rubicund and stout Joe Burton, a pail of purée in one hand and some table cutlery and silverware and a napkin in the other, made a dash at the vehicle, and with help from Orville effected an entrance.

"Merry Christmas!" said Orville.

"Merry Christmas! Awfully sorry, old man, but it might be worse. Better drink it out of the pail. They gave me a knife and fork, but they neglected to put in a spoon or a dish. I thought that you were probably killed, but I never imagined this. Miss Badeau was terribly worked up. I think that she had decided on white carnations. Nice girl. You could easily jump, old man,



"SEVERAL BOYS WERE TRYING TO KEEP UP WITH THE VEHICLE."—P. 269.

if you hadn't sprained your foot. Hurt much?"

"Like the devil; but I'm glad it worried Miss Badeau. No, I don't mean that. But you know."

"Yes, I know," said Burton, with a sociable smile. "Mrs. Marten told me. Nice girl. Let her in next time. Unusual thing, you know. People are very apt to jump *from* a runaway vehicle, but it seldom takes up passengers. Let her get in, and you can explain matters to her. You see, she sails early in the morning, and you haven't much time. You can tell her what a nice fellow you are, you know, and I'm sure you'll have Mrs. Marten's blessing. Here's where I get out."

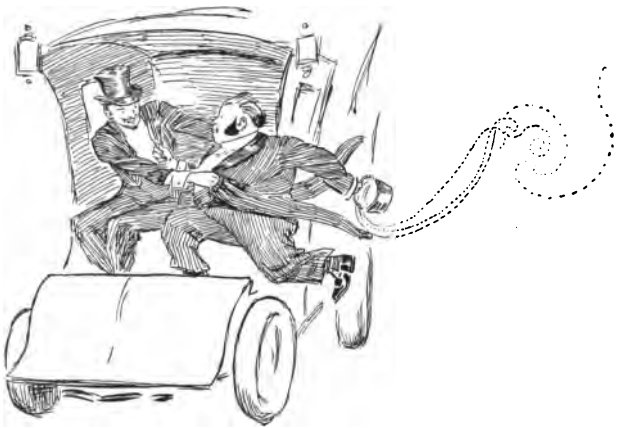
With an agility admirable in one of his stoutness, Mr. Burton leaped to the street and ran up the steps to speak to Miss Badeau. Orville could see her blush, but there was no time for her to become a passenger that trip, and the young man once

more made the circuit of the block, quite alone, but strangely happy. He had never ridden with Annette, except once on the elevated road, and then both Mr. and Mrs. Marten were of the company.

Round sped the motor, and when the Martens' appeared in sight, Annette was on the sidewalk with a covered dish in her hand and a look of excited expectancy on her face that added a hundredfold to its charms.

"Here you are—only ten cents a ride. Merry Christmas!" shouted Orville gayly, and leaned half out of the automobile to catch her. It was a daring, almost an impossible jump, yet Annette made it without accident, and, flushed and excited, sat down in front of Mr. Thornton without spilling her burden, which proved to be sweetbreads.

"Miss Badeau—Annette, I hadn't expected it to turn out this way, but of course your aunt doesn't care, or she wouldn't have let you come. We're really in no danger. This driver has had more experience dodg-



"MERRY CHRISTMAS!"—P. 272.

"WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO GO TO PARIS ON A BRIDAL TRIP?"—P. 275.

ing teams in this last hour than he'd get in an ordinary year. They tell me you're going to Europe early to-morrow, to leave all your friends. Now, I've something very important to say to you before you go. No, thanks, I don't want anything more. That purée was very filling. I've sprained my ankle, and I need to be very quiet for a week or two, perhaps until this machine runs down, but at the end of that time would you——"

Orville hesitated, and Annette blushed sweetly. She set the sweetbreads down upon the seat beside her. Orville had never looked so handsome before to her eyes.

He hesitated. "Go on," said she.

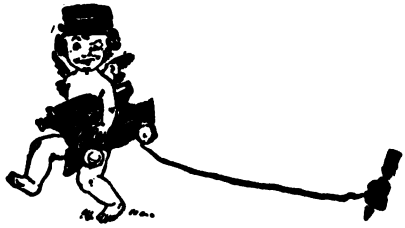
"Would you be willing to go to Paris on a bridal trip?"

Annette's answer was drowned in the hurrah of the driver as the automobile, gradually slackening, came to a full stop in front of the Martens'.

But Orville read her lips, and as he handed

his untouched sweetbreads to Mrs. Burton, and his sweetheart to her uncle, his face wore a seraphically happy expression; and when Mr. Marten and the driver helped him up the steps at precisely eight o'clock, Annette's hand sought his, and it was a jolly party that sat down to a big though somewhat dried-up Rhode Island turkey.

"Marriage also is an accident," said Mr. Burton.



Veritable Quidors

I WAS a stranger in that part of the country and yet I had managed to have extra good luck at both shooting and fishing, and that without a guide. I had shipped my spoils to Boston and was walking to Panscot in order to see what was said to be one of the best examples of ecclesiastical architecture of the Colonial type to be found in New England.

Thanksgiving Day was but a few days distant, and the air was redolent of autumnal spices. A more than ordinarily moist summer had kept many of the trees in full leafage, and maples and hickories looked proud to be flaunting their red and yellow banners so late in November.

My way, which had run along a wood road, suddenly opened upon a highway in

good repair for that section of the country, and yet the tufts of grass between the ruts gave evidence that it was not traveled overmuch. My chance of obtaining a lift to Panscot was not a good one.

I consulted my pocket compass and turned to the right, breaking into a long stride that I might reach my journey's end before nightfall.

As I walked I heard the crunch of heavy wheels behind me, and, looking back, I saw an old-fashioned and very dilapidated omnibus lumbering down upon me. It was drawn by two "rat-tailed, ewe-necked bays" and was driven by Michael Angelo's Moses. Ah, but he was a patriarchal fellow, and looked like a leader in Israel, and yet he was Yankee clear through.

As he came alongside he reined up and said, "Going to Panscot?"

"If I don't get lost," said I.

"I can take you there for a half a dollar," said he, and then added in an apologetic

tone: "Y' see, this is reg'ler stage rowte, or I'd carry ye fer nuthin'."

"I shouldn't think it would pay if you don't have any more passengers than you have to-day," said I, glancing at the empty 'bus and then climbing up alongside the driver. It is better to ride with a companion than to walk alone.

He covered my legs with an ancient horse-blanket, and as he clucked to the horses he said, "It *don't* pay. Fact is, you can tell your grandchildren, ef you ever git as far 's that, that you rode on the last trip of the Doddtown an' Panscot stage. That darned new railroad has run me out of a living at seventy-four years of age."

I expressed interest in his bit of news, and encouraged him to go on, and after cutting off a generous slice of Virgin Leaf and remarking that he chewed tobacco for the "teethache," he told me his history, which was mournful enough.

"Ef Colonel Shaw was alive to-day I'd

be retired on a pension jes' as soon as they wound up the affairs of the company, but the Colonel died a couple of years ago, an' his pardner, Lemuel Dan'elson, is business clean through, an' when he hands me my eight dollars endin' up this week, he'll walk off without sayin' a word, jes' as ef I hadn't drove on this rowte fer twenty-five years, an' drove this very stage fer twenty. After I get my eight dollars I'll drive the stage down to my house, an' I'll tell Rhody—she's my wife—thet she can have a noo henhouse on wheels, an' then I'll turn the hosses out in the lot, an' my life-work 'll be done, an' nuthin' but the stage an' hosses to show fer 't."

"How do *you* happen to own the stage and the horses?" I asked.

"Well, Lemuel Dan'elson, he owed me a month's wages about six months ago, an' fin'ly he says, says he, 'You can have the hosses an' the stage ef you'll give me five dollars to boot, an' we'll call it square.'

Y' see, the hosses aint wuth five dollars apiece, stric'ly speakin', an' I knoo the stage wouldn't hold out many centuries more, but I took him up, fer I see the finish of everything then. I knoo this railroad was goin' through, an' I wanted the stage an' the hosses where I could look arter them. Stage remin's me of the 'One-Hoss Shay' my boy used to recite when he was at school. It 'll drop to pieces all to once. Ever read it? Writ by Oliver Wendell Holmes, of Bost'n."

I told him that I had read it, and that as soon as I had seen the team, they had reminded me of the deacon's horse.

He fetched a hearty laugh and clucked lovingly to the superannuated pair, and they pricked up their ears and struck a four-mile-an-hour gait as willingly as if they had been colts.

"Stage was sightly enough when the Colonel brought it up from Noo York. My ol' woman has always kept the little picters clean——"

Here he paused and looked down through a small hole in the front end of the stage, evidently a place through which fares were handed.

"By gummy," said he, "I can't turn it into a henhouse 'less I take out them picters. Whoa-p!"

The stage came to a sudden stop because the right-hand tug had snapped. The venerable driver leaped nimbly off the seat and, taking from his pocket an awl and some pieces of copper wire, he proceeded to couple the two parts of the trace quite as if it were an ordinary thing. And I now noticed that it *was* an ordinary thing, and that the leather harness was reinforced with copper wires in a dozen places.

While he was tinkering at the harness I went back to take a look at the "picters," wondering what he meant. I found them to be panel pictures set above the windows and in the swinging door at the back. There were perhaps a dozen or more, and they

might have been painted by some disciple of Watteau, so dainty were the conceptions and so harmonious and decorative the coloring.

"Where did you say that stage came from?" said I after we had taken up our journey again.

"From Noo York. Colonel Shaw went down there jes' after they quit runnin' stages on Broadway an' took up with hoss cars, an' he bought two of 'em, but the other one got afoul of the railroad down to Turner's Crossing about five years ago, an', as I tole my ol' woman at the time, thet was the las' stage of the perceedings. Warn't more'n slivers left. Before thet, Jed. Huit used to drive, startin' from Doddtown when I left Panscot, an' turn about, but he got his arm broke an' both the hosses was kilt, an' the Colonel, he retired Jed. on a pension, an' I was left to do the hull business. Like the picters?"

"Why, they're worth framing," said I. "They're little gems."

"Thet's what lots of folks has said. I believe they call 'em kromios. Well, we'll put 'em in the parlor jes' ez they are."

Here the old fellow suddenly changed the subject by looking around at me quizzically and saying, "Don't know of a likely place in the city fer a young feller like me thet aint afraid of work, do yer?"

I hardly knew how to take his question, jocose though its intention was, and I said nothing for a moment. Somehow it struck me as pathetic. My companion was silent, except for whistling a bar of the "Arkansaw Traveler" over and over with a peculiar indrawing and exhaling of the breath that sustained the tone indefinitely.

"Can't you farm it?" said I, just for the sake of saying something.

"Farms aint overproductive in winter hereabouts," said he dryly, looking at me from under his shaggy eyebrows. "No, I can't farm it, an' I have only a couple of acres, anyhow. Y' see, our boy went West

to make his fortune, an' I sold pretty much all the land I had to git him started, an' he married out there, but somehow the money got soaked up in one er them dry times in Kansas, an' his wife died, leavin' him a little tot, an' fin'ly he come home with the consumption, an' ma she baby'd him an' done what she could with herbs an' some of these here paytent med'cines, but it warn't no use, an' we had to give him up. An' the little girl she done the best she could to take his place in his ma's heart, but of course it warn't quite the same. So ther's jes' us three an' me out of a job an'—Thanksgiving nex' week."

I ventured to say that he had not much to be thankful for, but he laid his hand on my knee impressively and said:

"Don't say that. My boy is better off than ef he was sufferin' here. An' Rhody, she enjoys better health than most people at seventy-two, an' little Becky, she's sunshine all the time, wet weather or dry. Ef I had

some money laid by to carry her along until some feller gives her a home of her own I wouldn't fret a bit. Anyhow, 'taint ez ef we was among strangers. We know everyone an' everyone knows us. Folks around here is neighborly. Aint a day passes thet someone don't run in to chat with Rhody, an' as fer the money part of it, we won't be objec's of charity ez long ez I can use an ax or a saw. We'll have plenty to thank the Lord fer when Thanksgivin' comes 'round, an' I dare say He'll raise up some way of pervidin' fer Becky ef we're called away while she's a child. But I'll miss these trips. By gummy, the people I've met an' the talks I've had! Why, I haint never be'n more'n fifty miles from Panscot, but I feel's if I'd be'n 'round the world. Swappin' talk is a big eddication. I'll miss thet part of it the wust way, but ther' aint no law ag'in my hitchin' up my team ef it gits extry lonesome, an' drivin' over the road on my own hook an' jes' fer the company I may pick up. Nex'

summer, ef the Lord spares me, I cal'late to do thet consider'ble jes' fer the sake of seein' the world."

And the way between Panscot and Doddtown is mostly through the woods. Yet I doubt not that Ezra Mathews had seen more of the world on those monotonous trips than many a globe trotter who travels with eyes and ears hermetically sealed.

I saw the end of the Doddtown and Panscot stage line; I was in at the death. My fine old patriarch drove up to the Globe Hotel and walked into the office with me close behind. He handed in one dollar, a passenger having ridden from Doddtown to Hackettsville. Then he said to the thin-nosed individual with a mouth like a bank slit, and who proved to be Lemuel Danielson: "Well, Lemuel, this winds up the stage-coach business in these parts."

"Hmn, hmn," said Lemuel, much as if Ezra had said we were likely to have a fair day to-morrow. Then he put the dollar into

the drawer, took up eight dollars which he handed to the driver with the remark, "Wages," and picked up his paper which he had been reading.

We walked out of the hotel, but just as we reached the veranda Lemuel called out in a harsh, penetrating voice, "Come back, Ezry."

Ezra went back, but I stayed outside. In a minute he returned with a queer smile hovering on his lips.

"Wanted me to give him a receipt in full for all my wages up to to-day. Jes' suppose the world was full of *his* kind——"

I accompanied Ezra to his home, in the stage. He said he wanted to show me a letter written by John Hancock to his grandfather.

John Hancock must have kept the ink manufacturers busy furnishing the raw material for his flamboyant but sturdy signature. There it was at the end of a letter, and in spite of the lapse of time there seemed to

be ink enough in it to carry it well into the next century.

But more interesting to me than the autograph was the old stage driver's little granddaughter, Becky. She met her grandpa with a kiss of welcome, and set me wondering if the old man would be able to keep her out of the poorhouse until she should be of age to marry. I really did not wonder that he felt he had much to be thankful for with such an incarnation of sunshine in the house.

I also had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Mathews, and feeling that I knew her through her husband, I told her that I was sorry that the old stage line was broken up, and then I regretted that I had mentioned the subject, for her eyes filled.

I hate to see people cry, and so it would seem did Miss Becky, for she sprang into her grandmother's lap and began to wipe away the tears with her clean little apron. Mrs. Mathews excused herself on the plea that she thought her buscuits were burning, and the

two went into the kitchen, while Mr. Mathews asked me to come out and he would show me the church in quest of which I had come to Panscot.

He had left the team at his hitching-post, and he now drove it into his barn, its shed, where he unhitched the horses.

"There now," said he, giving each one a slap on the flank, "take your vacation same as city folks. I'm tired of drivin' ye, an' we need the stage fer our chickens."

Whether the horses understood him or not is open to question, but they certainly understood one of their new prerogatives, for they both ambled off down a lane to a bit of meadow, and then lying down they tried to roll over, and, after many attempts, one of them succeeded, to his companion's impotent envy.

The church proved to be all my fancy had pictured it, and I hope that there is a village protective association that will see to it that no one defaces it with modern furbishings.

Its gracefully tapering white spire, its dentals and classic floral festoons, are reminders of a time when people had unconscious good taste, and had not become sophisticated enough to be vulgar, although, to be sure, they were decades away from that era of a love for the arts that is now upon us.

I took my leave of the kindly old man with sincere regret and went back to the Globe Hotel, and the next morning I took an early train for New York, to which I was going for the first time in my life on a visit to a landscape painter who has found out how to be artistic and successful at the same time.

I supposed that the story of the old stage driver was finished. I recognized him as a picturesque personage, and I told my artist friend all about him, because, although he paints landscapes, he is interested in men. For some reason, perhaps because I thought that an "arrived" painter would not care to hear about the decorations in an old New York omnibus, I did not say anything about

the "kromios," but I did enlarge upon the old man's loss of occupation and the precariousness of the future of the sunny little Becky, and Maltby was all sympathy at once.

"Pretty country up there?" said he. "Paintable?"

"Beautiful. Just your style, too. Do you think of going up there next summer?" said I, laughing, for I knew that Maltby reserved his summers for the South of France.

"I was thinking that perhaps I *might* go up there and board with the old chap."

"Well, I'm afraid that they are too old to take kindly to boarders."

And then the matter dropped and we talked of other things.

After dinner we were sitting in Maltby's studio, smoking. He was talking about early American artists and how some of them who were in advance of their times died unrecognized. "There's one old chap who would have been a court favorite in the days of Louis XIV., but as he happened to

"HE HAD TO EKE OUT HIS LIVING."—P. 293.

live in New York in the early part of this century he had to eke out his living by painting panels in omnibuses and on fire engines. His name was John Quidor. He worked on canvas, too, you understand, but he relied on his money for the landlady by doing what many artists would have considered plebeian work. Most of the stages were sold and broken up long ago, but I was lucky enough to get hold of one picture the other day that I wouldn't part with for $500. It's worthy of most of the old Dutch *genre* painters."

I don't know why it didn't remind me of my old stage driver's "kromios," but I never thought a thing about them until Maltby had taken me into his bedroom and had showed me a panel of some village children sliding on the ice. I almost yelled when I saw it.

"Why, man, the old fellow up in Maine has a dozen of those. His stage-coach came from New York——"

"What!" cried Maltby, taking my hand in his in his earnestness. "Are you sure?"

"Am I *sure?* Of *course* I am. There's a scene in a park, a lady feeding her deer, and a Maypole dance, and, let me see,—and a sleigh ride and the last load of hay and two or three others, some of them illustrating scenes in Irving's sketches."

"Oh, George!" said Maltby, "carry me home to die! There's a picture collector in this town who told me that he would give his eye teeth for one of those pictures. If they are veritable Quidors that old man up in Maine is about to sit down in a tub of butter. I'll sell just one of them to Pridham at a good price and I'll keep the rest. Are you dead sure that they are the real thing? When can we go up there? Does he appreciate their value?"

Maltby is an excitable fellow, and he was all over the room while he was talking, now looking at the little panel, and then putting questions to me like shot out of a cannon.

I was willing to stake my reputation on the fact that the pictures in the omnibus and the one that Maltby had were by the same hand, and as a consequence the next evening's express into Panscot bore the artist and myself. . . .

Maltby had been looking at the pictures by the light of a candle, and we were now sitting in the parlor, and in the doorway stood the little granddaughter, who seemed to be afraid to enter a room sacred to funerals as a general thing.

"Do you mean to say that you two grown men come all the way up here to look at them picters?" said Ezra.

"Not exactly that," said Maltby slowly, "I want to buy them. How much are they worth?"

Mrs. Mathews was of the party, and she fairly hung on Ezra's answer. She seemed to have a keen eye for business.

"Why," said Ezra, "I didn't cal'late to sell 'em. I'm kinder fond of 'em myself. If

they're wuth a trip up here to you I guess they're wuth keepin'——"

"Why, Ezry, aint you ashamed of yourself?" said Mrs. Mathews, her voice trembling with intensity. "We aint in a position to refuse this gentleman's offer to buy."

"No, no, so we haint," said Ezra, a new light breaking on him. "But, mother, I like them picters an' I was go'n' to have 'em sawed out an' set up in here."

"Well, what are they worth?" asked Maltby in a hard, businesslike tone that surprised me.

Ezra looked at his wife, and then he looked at the little vision in the doorway. "Well," said he finally, "I guess ef you've come all the way up here from 'York they ought to be wuth—they ought to be wuth t——"

Ezra looked appealingly at his wife. He was plainly going to say "two dollars apiece," but I saw the knotted fingers of her right hand straighten out, and he said,

"They ought to be worth five dollars apiece."

The simplicity of the old couple appealed to me and I hoped that the low figure would awaken Maltby's usually generous instincts, but he seemed to be overcome by his rare chance for a bargain.

"I don't know," said he musingly. "After all, they're only decorations in a very old stage-coach. I think that four dollars and a half apiece would be a better figure. *That* would be nearly eighty dollars for the lot."

"E—e—ighty dollars!" said Ezra, sucking in his breath with evident surprise at the grand total.

"Eighty dollars!" said Mrs. Mathews, setting her head on one side and patting her husband's hand affectionately.

Then Ezra turned to me and said, "Young man, I guess Thanksgivin' Day will be a time of extray rejoicing in this fam'ly."

As for me I felt like denouncing Maltby for a mean cad.

Luckily I kept my mouth shut, but it was hard work. I made up my mind to double the amount on my own hook and let my friend know of it when we had returned to New York.

Suddenly Maltby broke into a hearty laugh.

"I thought that Yankees were born bargainers," said he. "If you'd held out for five I should have given it."

This, in my opinion, was adding insult to injury, but Maltby seemed to enjoy rubbing it in, and as for the Mathewses, they did not seem to realize that they were losing a great opportunity. They looked at each other delightedly and murmured "eighty dollars" at intervals.

At last Maltby rose to his feet and said as he walked toward the door, "I just wanted to see what I could do in the way of bargaining myself, but I'm not very good at it."

Here he put his hands on little Becky's head and the child nestled up to him in a way I thought he did not deserve.

He went on, "Of course I want to pay you what the pictures are worth to me, and I want to tell you that I expect to get all my money back. I'll pay you $200 apiece for them, or $3200 for the lot."

Then I had such a revulsion of feeling that I had to leave the room. I went out and sat down in the stage, and by the moonlight I could see the sixteen pictures that were to make the next Thursday a day of Thanksgiving indeed for Ezra and his wife—and little Becky.

THE END

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